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THE ROME OF SAINT PAUL

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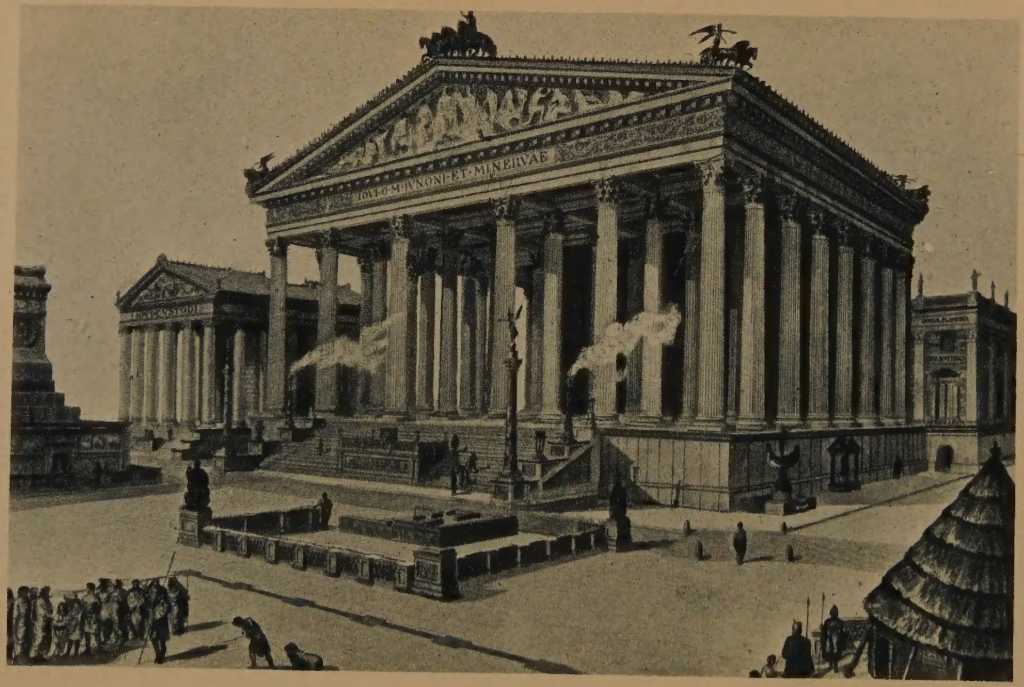

THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER ON THE CAPITOL
With hut of Romulus in corner
(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

THE
ROME OF SAINT PAUL

By

ALBERT G. MACKINNON, M.A., D.D.

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"MALTA THE NURSE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN,"
ETC.

LONDON
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY
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FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1930
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Made in Great Britain

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THE ROME OF SAINT PAUL

CHAPTER ONE

THE WHITE CITY

THE white city in sight! Julius halts his company on the farther slope of Ariccia, as the Campagna, dotted with houses, bursts into view. Twenty miles away, the sun glints from the marble palaces of Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula on the Palatine Hill.

For a few minutes the centurion lets his men stand at ease; for it is their first glimpse of home after years of foreign service. Eyes are strained to catch the familiar outlines of the Imperial City. Hardened faces relax. With what diverse emotions do the men in those dust-coated ranks view that scene! Some are thinking of their favourite cabarets, where on the morrow they hope to spend a jovial night with old cronies. Julius himself has a vision of a Roman matron who will proudly welcome home her soldier-husband. What a lot he has to tell her, but most of all about his prisoner. As for Paul's thoughts, we shall guess at them directly.

Possibly it is the sunset hour, when Rome always looks its best, even from a distance. Horace tells us that Ariccia was the first halting-place on the outward journey.

Leaving Imperial Rome, my course I steer
To poor Ariccia and its moderate cheer.
(HORACE, Satire 5, Book I.)

The sunset fades into a glow, then merges into the wan light which precedes the dusk. The tones become more grey, and the shafts of flashing marble which had pierced the sombre outline of roof and portico recede into the shadows. Another night creeps over that centre of the world. Unobtrusively it approaches, and the fifteen hundred thousand souls who are busy with their evening tasks know not that out there on the slopes of Ariccia it is bringing one in its train who is to challenge the forces of tyranny, who is to prove himself the greatest Ambassador of Him whose mission was "to preach deliverance to the captives and to set at liberty them that are bruised."

For Paul, that sight aroused many thoughts. He was a born soldier. He had often heard the trite tale of the Roman general who had counselled his men to shorten their swords so that they might get at closer grips with the enemy. That, too, was his method, to strike at the heart. Rome was the strategic point, but how difficult it had been to reach it. Perhaps the law against Jewish immigration into Rome was a barrier. If so, he had strangely circumvented it. He was about to enter the city under escort. To refuse him admission would be to challenge the authority of Cæsar. Paul relished a joke, and he must have smiled to himself as he appreciated the grim point of this one. The very power which might have been invoked to forbid

him entrance was the very one which opened the door. Truly it had been a long, long way; but now that the goal was in sight, he forgot the misery of those two years of imprisonment in Cæsarea, the hardships of the journey. On that March evening in A.D. 60 he was at last within sight of one of the greatest goals of his life.

Trudging across the Pontine Marshes, he had suffered a little from depression. We get a hint of that in the rebound of spirit with which he greeted the friends from Rome who had met him at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns, "whom when Paul saw, he thanked God and took courage." Physical causes may have accounted a little for this. Horace gives us a picture of that route:

> "The water here was of so foul a stream,
> The fenny frogs with croakings hoarse and deep,
> And gnats loud buzzing."

The discomfort of such a march must have been very trying, and it is not likely that Julius could lay hands on sufficient transport, which would enable him to embark so big a company on barges, and thus have them carried the length of the canal from Terracina to Appii Forum. The hardness of the paved way, the buzzing mosquitoes, the blazing sun, must have found out the weak spots in Paul's constitution, and perhaps afforded Luke opportunities for special ministrations. Was he to arrive in Rome, after all, unfit for service?—that was Paul's

fear. What is the use of reaching one's objective if one cannot hold it? Not Rome itself, but the opportunities it offered was what Paul desired.

But now all is changed. There is an invigorating power in a hand-grip. That group of stalwarts who had walked out the forty-three miles to Appii Forum, and the older men who had reached the Three Taverns, which is near the modern Cisterna, thirty-one miles from Rome, had by their welcome put new life into the wearied prisoner. Such an act revealed much. It told the Apostle that there was a live Church at the end of the journey.

The suggestion had been a happy inspiration. I wonder who proposed it? My own guess singles out Priscilla. This remarkable woman has cast a long shadow, and it rests to-day on some spots in Rome. That she was the dominant personality in her own home is seen from the fact that she is often mentioned before her husband, and as the church in those days was in the house, her influence in it would be in corresponding proportion. I can see her busying herself to get together a reception committee to give the Apostle a welcome. I am not so sure but that to some extent she was responsible for his coming. In those long evenings in Corinth, when he was their lodger, what talks they must have had about Rome. She knew it, for probably she had been born there. Paul was a listener as she described the capital of the world. She fanned his interest with her words; for her keen mind quickly realised how much it would mean for the spread of the Gospel to have Paul at

the centre. It was after he had shared the hospitality of her home that the Apostle declared: "I must also see Rome."

When the news reached the little congregation that Paul's ship had arrived at Puteoli, there would be a hasty meeting. Priscilla would be one of the first on her feet. She had the art of arousing enthusiasm; she also had the practical sense to realise how much a kindly welcome would mean to the sensitive spirit of the prisoner. The women of the church would do their best to look after the creature comforts; but something was expected of the men. It was no light thing to ask them to give up their business for perhaps six days and face a walk of eighty-six miles. Besides, the act was not free from danger. They were going to meet one who was in chains and declare themselves friends of one who would be popularly considered a criminal. But when she sat down, I think a bunch of men would be on their feet in an instant, a little vanguard of the Church's heroic helpers. It has never lacked that type, and when some pressing duty calls, there are always the volunteers ready to go to the Three Taverns or even as far as Appii Forum.

So Paul was cheered and the rest of the journey made lighter as he kept step with those Roman Christians who had so much to tell him of the wonderful progress of the Gospel in the city. The news was good, but it was tempered with much that saddened as well. Nero was on the throne, and the shadow of evil fell darkly over public life. These men were like

scouts who had come to report to their general the strength and the positions of the enemy, and their words might well bring dismay to the Apostle's heart. How colossal were the powers he was daring to challenge; but he remembered David and his pebble, and the message to Zechariah: "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."

While the others slept that night, I think Paul kept a lonely vigil with the stars. The dream of his life was about to be realised; but how different was the reality from the vision. The very shadows seemed alive with opposing forces. Little more than a mile from where he sat, paganism had entrenched itself in temple rites which surpassed all others in cruelty and villainy. There, on the shores of Lake Nemi, stood the temple of Diana Nemorensis. Its area, perhaps the largest of any sacred edifice in history, occupied forty-four thousand square yards, and was shut in by groves within whose gloomy recesses tragedy lurked. The building itself, chaste in its Grecian architecture, was not large. There was no need for that. Its duty was to house the stone image of the goddess. She was no beauty, being roughly carved, with a rude head and protruding arm which gripped a sword. Yet how often in the nursery one sees that a little girl will discard her richly clad dolls and idolise some torn and filthy Sambo, which she hugs to her heart. If dolls could be jealous, they would often have good cause on account of the capriciousness of their owners. Images had the

same grievance. With them the race was not always to the swift nor the battle to the strong. Many a beautiful Venus might look with disdain at the uncouth image on the shores of Lake Nemi which yet out-rivalled her in power over the souls of men.

That image had her gala day. A royally bedecked barge awaited her pleasure. With music and dancing she was borne from her sanctum and carried on to its deck. Then began her voyage round the lake. Its banks were lined with thousands who had come far to witness that strange religious procession, as gaily dressed boats with their throngs of merry worshippers followed in the train of the goddess and made the hill-sides re-echo with their chants. On such occasions her priest enjoyed his one brief day of glory. It was always short-lived. For the moment he was safe on shipboard, protected by the zeal of the people; but when the sun set and the crowds dispersed and he landed again with his sacred charge, haunting fear, reinforced by the very popularity of the moment, made sleep dangerous.

Some other scoundrel, as hunted an outlaw as perhaps he himself once was, had looked out on that scene from his lair of brushwood. There he saw the priest of Diana feasting in honour while he starved. Maybe he was a runaway slave who had found the groves of Nemi a good hiding-place. Exposure meant death to him in its most horrible form. There was only one way of escape, and that was by a glittering door. He could himself become the high priest of Diana, and be fêted and honoured like the

hero of that procession. All that was needed was a quick thrust of the knife; for the strange law ran that he who killed the priest stepped into his shoes. So the hungry outlaw creeps down at night to the silent temple. Like a leopard, he crouches stealthily amongst the underwood. The difficulty is the wide, open courtyard; but if the risk is great, so also is the prize. He waits until a dark cloud obscures the moon, and then, seeking the shadows, crawls nearer the shrine. He reaches its threshold and lies flat to listen. Is the breathing of the priest within heavy or light? The priest is known to be a man of prowess, and he never even rests without a sword grasped ready in his hand. But it is exhausting work being a hero even for one day; and having fastened the door, as he thinks securely, his weary head droops on his breast, and he is living over in dreams the triumph of that glorious procession.

Quietly a deft hand tampers with the door. Very gently it is pushed open—not so softly but that a sound reaches the sleeper. In a second, half-dazed, he is on his feet, glaring into the darkness. The intruder realises that he is detected. To turn his back now would but offer a free target to his antagonist. There is only one thing left, and that is to make a spring on his prey in the hope that his eyes are not sufficiently awake. That swift act gives him the victory. Though fear had almost automatically roused the priest, it had not chased the dreaminess from his vision, and for that tiger-like bound it would have needed an eye alert. One moment more

THE ROMAN FORUM

The Rostra on the left, the Senate House, and the Basilica Æmilia, with the Temple of Julius Cæsar at far end

(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

and he would have been himself again, a match for his assailant; but that moment is not granted. One fell stroke cleaves the dream-clouded brain, and when morning dawns there is a new high priest in the temple of Diana!

An interesting bas-relief was found at Genzano in A.D. 1791, on which was represented a combat between the priest in possession and his assailant. The former, mortally wounded, has fallen to the ground; his victorious rival, clad in a chlamys, raises his sword. Four priestesses are present; two lift their hands in supplication, and another lays hers on the victor's shoulder, as if to calm his fury.

The worship of this goddess goes back to earliest times. The legend was that Orestes, with his sister Iphigenia, brought the image of Diana from Taurus, which is the Crimea of to-day, and set up her sanctuary near Ariccia. The Scythian origin of the cult might explain the bloodthirsty traditions connected with it. Those Eastern hands left a smear of blood on whatever they touched. If the pedigree were long, though not one to be proud of, the duration of the cult merits the respect of age. It lasted for at least twelve hundred years down to A.D. 391, when all pagan temples were closed by the edict of Valentinian and Theodosius.

In the shadows of the night Paul seems to feel the presence of what he calls "principalities, powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world, spiritual wickedness in high places." The morrow was to bring but fresh evidence of the entrenched forces of superstition, ignorance, and tyranny.

In entering on the last stage of the Via Appia, Paul found himself marching mile after mile through Rome's great cemetery. There, on either side, rose endless tombs engraved with the names of the great. Vain pride of Rome and ancient Romans who, since they could not conquer death, would fain have an eternal city for their dead! All the boasted mythology of its religions was powerless to answer the question: "Shall the dust praise thee?" Yet this chained prisoner was bringing with him a great hope, and to those who received his message he was able to give the consolation that "Ye sorrow not, even as others who have no hope."

But even greater than the hope was the love he carried with him in his heart. It was the medicine a sick world needed. Before the day closed he was possibly to see, as they halted in the Forum, a bronze statue which impersonated the very spirit of Rome. We can still look on that old figure, preserved now in the Museum of the Capitol. It is the Wolf. Generations of Romans gazed admiringly on that cruel, cunning face; and just as the statuettes of Romulus and Remus beneath are supposed to be feeding on the wolfish milk, so the children of the city imbibed the spirit of the beast they reverenced. In that Wolf to-day you see a visible picture of the temper of the people to whom Paul came with his Gospel of love.

Perhaps the greatest force of all was the new ideal which Paul brought with him and with which he meant to displace the old one to which the city paid homage. Rome worshipped many gods; but its real

god was material might. "All these things will I give thee," said this god, "if thou wilt fall down and worship me," and Rome bowed the knee, and reaped the reward, the transient one which alone this god can give. Its surface prosperity perhaps reached its height in the reign of Trajan, when Rome became geographically the actual centre of its own Empire. The moral turn of the tide took place, however, when Tiberius made Capri his home, and built there his twelve villas to shelter Eastern vice. Rome fell in later centuries, not because it was conquered by the barbarian from the north, but because its strength was sapped by the vice of the East. Like another Samson, it had gone to sleep on the knees of Delilah, and when awakened by the cry "The Philistines be upon thee!" discovered too late that its strength was gone. Once it had met and beaten the only adversary worthy of its steel, Hannibal the Carthaginian; its other enemies had been men of straw. The Goth and the Vandal would have been broken like spray dashed from the steamer's bow; but the engines at the heart had ceased, progress had stopped, already the ship was a wreck awaiting the waves to claim their own.

Paul came to displace the Wolf by the Lamb. While the former brought ruin, the latter imparted new life. Rome rose from her ashes when she made the Lamb her emblem, and its representation in mosaic in the early churches, such as is best seen in that of SS. Cosma and Damiano dating from the sixth century, fittingly expresses the new ideal.

Many historic monuments met the eye of the prisoner as he trudged along. Gamaliel had been too erudite a teacher and Paul too apt a scholar to have overlooked instruction in Latin lore. The Apostle knew his classics as well as his history of Rome; and so he would cast more than a passing glance at the marble-faced tower within which lay the ashes of Pompey the Great. Time has defaced it, yet still it stands as a warning to mortals of the fickleness of fame. At that time his villa had passed into the possession of the Cæsars. It covered an area of six miles, though with a pride that aped humility its owner called it a mere villa. Possibly it was from it that Hadrian in the next century borrowed the title for his country palace, which in size and magnificence must have exceeded any that ever existed. This, too, he called a "villa." Was it pride or humility that prompted the title? That childish vanity did not exhaust itself with emperors. In Greenock to-day one of the largest west-end mansions is called "Bagatelle." Its original builder must have had something of Hadrian or Pompey in him! Perhaps it was the thought of this tomb which suggested Paul's injunction to Timothy, when he wrote from Rome, "Be not high-minded nor trust in uncertain riches!"

A little farther on, this road, usually as straight as an arrow, belies itself and makes a short curve. There is no apparent reason for it. The ground is flat, and no natural obstacle obstructs the way. Yet Appius Claudius, its builder, was not the man to turn aside for trifles. When hills and valleys even were powerless

to make him swerve from the direct course, why on a flat plain should he spoil his record? The only reason which suggests itself is that this ground must have been considered sacred when the road was made in 312 B.C. Here was the honoured field of the Horatii which a grateful nation hallowed in memory of its three patriotic defenders. Of the five tombs mentioned by Livy, the ruins of three still remain.

Paul would recall the story as he viewed those five monuments which not merely commemorated a great victory, but kept in mind a primitive attempt to outlaw war by substituting the duel for the battle. If this plan of settling disputes had been adopted, what a mass of misery the world would have been saved. These ancient Romans were ahead even of our day in their efforts for peace. If modern nations would agree that when war threatened between two countries, the three statesmen most prominent in each in advocating the arbitrament of the sword should fight it out in an arena, there would be fewer bellicose speeches and no more wars!

It was during the reign of Tullus Hostilius, 672 B.C., that the Albans and the Romans came to blows. It had to be settled who was to be top dog. Latium was too small for two such powers. So on this field the armies confronted each other, as that was the only method known of settling disputes. Yet as the sun glinted on that brave show of armour, it did seem a tragic waste of life that thousands should be butchered before a decision should be reached. Who suggested the bright idea we do not know.

Some human heart, as well as quick-witted brain, conceived the thought. It caught on. How far Tullus Hostilius might have abided by the decision if it had gone against him, who knows? We have seen even ecclesiastical dignitaries, after appealing to Cæsar and being dissatisfied with his verdict, finding a Jesuitical plea for not obeying. Therefore, who are we, that we should censure this old Roman? Besides, he won the toss, and so had right as well as might on his side.

The two armies sat down to watch the fight. The Albans had sent three brothers called the Curiatii to be their champions; while the Romans, not to be behind in courtesy, responded with three brothers also, the Horatii. It was some cricket, as the Americans would say: the stake was the fate of Rome. In actual sword-play the Albans seem to have it; for man to man they slay two of the Romans in the first round. It looks as if the Imperial City were to become a suburb of Alba Longa. Then deception comes to its aid. That is not the first nor last time when Rome throve through guile. Romulus founded it—well—on an exaggeration, when he claimed to have seen thirteen birds against his brother's three. Now Horatius pretends to run away, and the three wounded Curiatii chase him with such pace as their fatigue and wounds allow. As these differed in severity, so naturally they followed the fugitive with unequal speed. When the Roman saw that they were separated, he wheeled round and took them one by one before they had time to recover from their surprise. The

monument standing alone to-day, and nearest to Rome, is probably that of the Curiatii who received the last *coup de grâce*, while the two which lie towards Albano are doubtless the tombs of the two Romans who first fell. The other two monuments have disappeared. As they belonged to conquered foes, it was not a work of piety to keep them in repair. Perhaps one of the best pictures of this historic scene is the fresco by Cavaliere d'Arpino in the Conservators' Palace on the Capitol of Rome.

Paul may have smiled if he saw the temple of the god Rediculus. The name is derived from the Latin *redire*, to return. It marks the spot where Hannibal made up his mind to leave Rome alone and retire southward. The spirit of the old Romans flashed out in a grim humour in those days. Not only did it show itself in a supreme confidence which purchased this bit of land at full market price at the very moment Hannibal's cavalry was trampling it under foot, but when he had departed, a fitting memorial of his visit was erected in this temple to the god Rediculus. About fifteen years before Paul's arrival a strange funeral took place here. There was an old raven which had built a nest for itself on the roof of the temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum at Rome. Wise old bird, it always saluted the Emperor Tiberius when he passed, and also Germanicus and Drusus. No wonder he was accorded a royal funeral when he died! With great pomp he was carried on a rich bier out to the temple of the god Rediculus and cremated. The sight of this building must have

armed Paul with a shaft of humour which no doubt he would use with deadly effect.

Paul and his companions were now entering the suburbs of the city. On either side rose magnificent villas. The Campagna had not then the deserted appearance of to-day. It was dotted with houses and gardens. The old wall of Servius was embedded in the city. In those days of the Roman *pax* there was no need for encircling fortifications, the Empire's defences were on its frontiers, and the citizens lived in security outside as well as within the boundaries of the Capitol.

Soon there rose before them that splendid landmark which to all time will mark this road—the tomb of Cecilia Metella. There it stands to-day, still guardian of the way. Stripped now of its marble, and foreshortened by the ruins of the fortress of the Gaetani, it still retains much of its ancient dignity.

> What was this tower of strength? Within its cave
> What treasure lay so locked, so hid?—a woman's grave.

It was erected by Crassus to the memory of his wife. He was the son of the famous millionaire and triumvir, about whom the story goes that the Parthians poured melted gold down his throat. She was thus perhaps the richest woman in Rome, and Byron was justfied in his couplet:

> This much alone we know, Metella died,
> The wealthiest Roman's wife: behold his love or pride.

PORTA CAPENA

The Gate through which Paul would enter the city. On the right is the temple of Honour and Virtue

(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

The tower was built in 79 B.C., and indirectly is a testimony to the good-feeling which existed between in-laws. Crassus honours his wife by publishing abroad the glories of her father. What an ideal son-in-law! Quintus Cæcilius Metellus had distinguished himself in Crete, where he won a victory and the surname Creticus. The son-in-law recalls that honour in an artistic way. On the frieze he has depicted the arrows and bows used by the Cretan archer, while spears surmounted by a wild boar, ensigns of Roman legions, and supported by anchors, symbolise the conquest of the island.

Paul by this time must have been getting a good idea of the wealth and luxury of the Romans. One after another he passed magnificent villas, all more or less modelled on the same pattern. They rose in steps and stairs on an artificial mound. Each terrace was supported by strong foundation walls, ornamented with niches and nymphæa. The lower part was laid out in a garden, while on the highest terrace stood the columned atrium and adjoining rooms. Thus the owner was always sure of a view, and besides, the different levels afforded opportunity for elaborate ornamentation. For instance, the same water could supply different fountains on the separate levels, overflowing from the one into the other, until the approach to the villa had the appearance of a cascade.

As they neared the city, the houses naturally became closer and smaller in size. The varying density of population might be pictured by four circles. The

first embraced the fourteen regions into which Augustus had divided Central Rome, the second enclosed houses separated from each other by small gardens, the third included little estates and orchards, and the fourth drew a circumference round the great villas. These stretched as far as Albano, a distance of twenty miles. In the same way, to the north, did the suburbs reach out, so that it is not an exaggeration to say that the diameter of the populated area was not less than forty miles. It is this which makes a guess at the population difficult; but one million and a half would be a reasonable estimate.

One familiar link between the Campagna of Paul's day and ours is the line of aqueducts which stretches across the plains. Now they are picturesque ruins; then some of them had been but recently erected, and were looked upon as one of the wonders of engineering skill. The Claudian had been completed only ten years before. Its arches, one hundred and ten feet high, are still an object of admiration, and one can well picture how attractive they would look in all the freshness of their youth. The Aqua Marcia carried its waters over seven miles of arches so high that it brought its flow to the summit of the Capitol. Paul's eyes must have rested appreciatively on them. They were evidences of the natural ability of man to control nature, and of the beneficent results when that skill is applied to a worthy object. The thousands of Rome had brought to their very doors an inexhaustible supply of water, fifty-four million cubic

feet a day. This could not be carried in pipes because the Romans had not discovered the secret of cast-iron. Hence the picturesque aqueducts.

The road now becomes congested. It is difficult for the detachment to keep at a steady pace, as it marches through that endless marble cemetery shaded by the ilexes of the villas and the olive-trees of the farms. Slaves jostle each other as they stagger under the weight of the country produce which they are carrying to the markets of the city. Wagons and carts intermingle. Here come groups of mourners to offer libations at the tombs of their dead. Travellers carried on the *lectica*, or driving the *rheda* or the *petorritum*, hasten on their journeys.

At the foot of the hill beyond the tower of Cecilia Metella, there is a villa at the roadside with an open door. Here are grouped a number of friends. The crowds had cast only a casual glance of pity or contempt at the chained prisoner; but here there is affection in look and word. It is the "House of Hermes." Its owner may have been one of those who had gone to meet the Apostle, and now his family and others have gathered to add their welcome. Julius cannot halt his men, much as he would like to oblige Paul. He is only a centurion, and at any moment may come under the eye of superior officers. Discipline must be enforced, so like Paul we shall have to leave this hospitable house for a later visit.

Up the slope, where now are found the catacombs of St. Calixtus, swings the contingent. There is a dressing of the ranks, the words of command are

sharper; Luke and Aristarchus, who had kept pace with the prisoner, are ordered with the other friends to the rear; the rigour of Rome begins to make itself felt. A long stretch of congested houses brings them to the Porta Capena. This region is now covered by the Archæological Park, which was planned by Guido Baccelli in 1887. The gardens of to-day conceal a buried suburb. At the time when they were made, there was not money enough for explorations, and it was thought best to preserve the ruins in this fashion until such time as the archæological coffers were full. So the secrets still sleep, awaiting the magnetic touch of gold.

The remains of the old gate were discovered in 1868, and the small medieval tower indicates their position to-day. Over it passed the two aqueducts, Aqua Marcia and Aqua Appia. On the left stood the tomb of Horatia, the sister of Horace, and the temple of Tempests. The latter was erected by the Consul L. Cornelius Scipio in 259 B.C. On the right, near the gate, was another imposing temple, that of Fortunae Reducis, built in honour of the Emperor Augustus when he returned from Spain in 19 B.C. The inscription is in the Royal Museum at Naples. But the most magnificent of all the buildings which adorned that entrance to the city was the temple of Honour and Virtue, founded by the Consul Quintus Fabius Maximus in 233 B.C., and restored by the Emperor Vespasian. In this temple were many works of art described by Pliny, Plutarch, and Cicero. An historic scene took place there on August 4,

57 B.C. Rome had found out its mistake, and was generous in its apologies. The Roman Senate here held a meeting to call back from exile its greatest orator, Cicero, and declare him the redeemer and father of his country. Poor man, he had many ups and downs in his life. His last up was when his head was stuck on the Rostra; but perhaps one should consider that a "down"! Anyhow, we do not grudge him his triumph at Porta Capena, when all Rome poured out to welcome him, and accompanied him to the Capitol with enthusiastic acclamations. These two temples were twins, Siamese ones, for they were joined together like semi-detached villas, and were still in existence in the fourth century A.D.

Looking to the left, Paul would see the great Circus Maximus, the idol of kings, consuls, and emperors. It was six hundred and twenty yards in length, more than three times as long as the Colosseum, while its breadth was two hundred and seventy yards. Seventy-two tiers of seats on the right, seventy-two on the left, and twenty-six in the curve accommodated one hundred and thirty-five thousand spectators. It was the greatest Circus in the world. If Paul had only prophetic vision, his eyes would have rested reverently on that magnificent arena, which so shortly was to be dyed with the blood of the martyrs.

Glancing up, he would catch sight of the marble walls of the palace of Augustus. He had appealed to Cæsar; he was now under his shadow; but there was something chilling, if not sinister, about these frowning battlements. What tragedies lurked in their

shadows! Man had built those princely courts, but cruelty and vice had made them their home.

At this point either of two routes may have been followed. The command "Right wheel!" may have turned the detachment up to the Cœlian Hill, where was situated the headquarters of the Foreign Legion; or the order may have been to march right into the centre of the city, and in the Forum to await the arrival of Burrus, the Pretorian Prefect, who would give instructions as to the disposal of the prisoners. We shall presume it was the latter, for it gives us a better introduction to the sights of Rome. There was then no Arch of Constantine and no Colosseum; but where the former now stands, the feet of the travellers began to tread the Via Sacra. This was where the triumphs entered on their final pageant. Originally the Via Sacra started on the Palatine, and this was only a side branch; but it soon became the most important end.

On the left, as they ascended the Summa Sacra Via, rose the magnificent temple of Jupiter Stator. It dated back to the earliest days of Rome, though it had been restored by the Consul Posthumius in 294 B.C. It was in its courts that Cicero had delivered one of his most famous orations. Thither he had called the Senate in 63 B.C., and addressed to it his violent tirade against Catiline. The enormous square blocks of the basement can still be seen, as well as a Corinthian capital and the fragment of a column. That is all that is left to-day of that imposing stronghold of paganism. The Gospel of the prisoner has cast

its stately pillars to the ground. But at that moment who dreamt that the man in chains was to transfer his shackles to the ancient gods and bind them hand and foot!

Near where the Arch of Titus is now seen, Paul would behold, perhaps with surprise, the statue of a woman on horseback. This was Clelia, who could rival in sportsmanship the most up to date of our modern girls. When Porsenna of Clusium threatened Rome she swam the Tiber under a shower of arrows, and in 508 B.C., while she was still living, the city erected this monument to her.

Here Paul caught a glimpse of the real city. Tenements rose in front of him, where lived the swarming multitudes. They were called *insulæ*, and were built of brick and timber, with small wooden balconies, called in Latin *mæniana* and in modern Italian *mignani* or *mignanelli*. Trajan forbade these tenements to be built higher than seventy feet; but the great fire had not yet taken place, and in all likelihood these blocks were much loftier. Here opened out the great bazaar of the Porticus Margaritaria. Within a few years it was to be swept by fire and the space cleared for the marble portico of Nero's Golden Palace. When Paul first saw it, dealers of all kinds crowded its narrow space. There were merchants of Oriental pearls. These were the aristocrats of the place. They were there first, and had bequeathed their name to the spot, these *margaritarii*. But in this life no monopoly lasts for ever, whether it be of palaces like the Cæsars' on the Palatine, or of

pearls like those of the traders under its shadow. Soon others demanded a place in the sun, though in these narrow streets there could be little of that. What a noisy centre of bartering it soon became. Here were goldsmiths (*aurifices*), jewellers (*gemmarii*), milliners (*auri vestrices*), engravers, metal founders, garland-makers, colour merchants, ointment dealers, perfume sellers, makers of wind instruments (*tibiarii*). Their customers added much to the universal din, as they tested their purchases before they paid for them. They had not the patience of the little boy who begged his father to buy him a trumpet. But when his parent hesitated because of the noise he would make, he replied, "I will only blow it when you are asleep!"

Here were men also of quieter trades: scribes who sat at their tables and offered to write your letters, book-sellers whose shelves were lined with the latest best-seller. In another corner were ham merchants (*pernarii*), doing good business and poking fun at Jews. Joiners, barbers, and a motley crew of other trades, all tried to ply their wares in that little bazaar about one hundred and fourteen yards long and sixty yards broad.

Down under the Arch of Fabius they would march, and then Paul would see the centre of the world. On his left was the temple of Julius Cæsar. Here, on August 18, 29 B.C., Augustus dedicated this building to the deified Cæsar. By that act he did more than consecrate stone and lime: he inaugurated a new faith which within a century tried by fire

THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS

The Royal box was on the left. The Spina in the centre was decorated by obelisks, and trophies from all over the world

(*Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi*)

and sword to crush the Christian religion. What forced martyrdom on the early Church was not the opposition of the ancient creeds so much as the new religion which Augustus set up when he deified Cæsar, the cult of the State. To refuse to worship Cæsar became the crime which drove men and women to the arena.

On the right rose perhaps the most magnificent building in the Forum, the Basilica Æmilia. Little did Paul think that it would be owing to him that even a relic of that proud edifice would survive the centuries. There is much in a name. So thought the wise Probianus, just a little over three hundred years later. He was Prefect of the City, and saw with dismay the Christians revenging themselves on the masterpieces of paganism. It is tantalising to find pedestals whose inscriptions indicate that they once bore statues by Praxiteles, Polycletus, Timarchus, etc. What a galaxy of art the Via Sacra must have been in its gala days. No modern gallery could rival it in the beauty of its sculptures. Probianus did his best to save the famous columns of pavonazetto marble which were the pride of the Basilica Æmilia. It bore the name of Æmilius Paulus; but by A.D. 386, when the new church was being erected over the grave of the Apostle Paul outside the walls, it was recognised that he had given a greater distinction to the name Paulus. Hence Probianus transferred the twenty-four columns of Phrygian marble to the Christian basilica, and their beautiful colour and stately lines crowned with capitals of exquisite

design have made that nave world-renowned. Unfortunately, in the fire of 1823 most of these were calcined.

When Paul looked on the basilica in the Forum he naturally foresaw nothing of this. Adorned with shields of gilded bronze, its walls gleamed in the sunlight. The site alone had cost Æmilius Paulus half a million pounds sterling, and the erection nearly as much. Talking of money, Paul would see the great Forum of Julius Cæsar opening out farther up on the right. Its founder had paid ten pounds sterling per square foot for the site, or nearly one million pounds in all. Such were the land-values of ancient Rome. Branching off from it was the Forum of Augustus, the most magnificent of all, whose ruins have but recently been disclosed to view.

On the opposite side stood what was then the latest addition to the Forum, the Basilica Julia. When campaigning, the great Cæsar had spent his nights in planning the adornment of the city he loved; and when power and opportunity were his, he lost no time in materialising his dreams. One of these was this imposing judgment hall. He began it in 54 B.C., and opened it in 46 B.C., two years before his own death; but it was not finally completed until A.D. 12. For Paul, its tribunal was to have a tragic interest. Somewhere within its colonnaded courts he was brought before a Roman magistrate for his second trial in A.D. 67, and heard his sentence of death pronounced.

Perhaps what would interest Paul most would be

the challenge which he felt came to him from an insolent paganism entrenched within those gleaming temples. That of Castor and Pollux faced him. Myth had encased itself in marble. Those magnificent columns, three of which still stand, were memorials of the childlike belief in the visible appearance of the twin gods who had helped the Romans to win the battle of Lake Regillus in 496 B.C.

More conspicuous, and dominating the Forum from its higher position, stood the temple of Saturn. Eight of its Ionic columns of granite still remain. They are older than the restoration in Diocletian's time. One of them has been hurriedly reset upside down, a true omen for the superstitious of what so shortly after took place in the overturning of paganism. The original temple was supposed to have been built about 498 B.C., and rebuilt in 42 B.C. It was remarkable for its strange ritual. Here was first inaugurated the custom of burning wax tapers, and from it has come our Christmas carnival. Within its portals, worshippers could pass with heads uncovered, while in its vaults were stored the treasures of the State. Towering above all these temples of the Forum, and catching the sunlight on its gilded roof, rose the most magnificent sanctuary of all, that of Jupiter Capitolinus. Plutarch tells us that the gilding of the bronze tiles in the time of Domitian cost as much as two million, three hundred and sixty thousand pounds sterling. In A.D. 1919 the pavement was uncovered, and in the Mussolini Museum can be seen the actual foundations of the earliest buildings. This takes us

back to 533 B.C. Then the augurs, addressing themselves to the envoys of King Tarquin the Proud, prophesied, "Go and tell, O Romans, that the place where you have discovered the skull (*caput*) is destined to become the capital of the whole of Italy!" From that time this spot, like the other most famous hill in history, was called the "Place of a Skull"—Capitolinus.

All this, and much more, must Paul's observant eye have taken in. Yet unlike the modern visitor to Rome, in his letters he says nothing about the sights. Imposing though these were, they were overshadowed by a greater fact, the cry for God, to which they gave an inarticulate expression. His vision sees the spiritual behind the material. The latter dissolves under that focus, and leaves only the stricken human soul with its appealing need. The white city had a black heart.

CHAPTER TWO

THE TEMPLE WORSHIP OF ROME

ROME was a city of temples. It paraded its piety in marble rather than in morals. One would have expected that where religious ritual met you at every corner, there would be something to show for it in the purified life of the community. Instead, its shrines were often sources of pollution, and as water cannot rise above its own level, the character of the worshipper was no better than that of his priest. Paul was not deceived by a sanctity confined to stones. Possibly no age had ever more beautiful sanctuaries or less religion. Paul came to make faith a force in life, and that was where his Gospel clashed with the precepts of paganism.

I can imagine that after a brief view of the city, Paul took stock of the powers which opposed him. He would classify these into five groups.

First there were the old gods of Latium. In his time they were already a spent force. In the days of Numa they had been a moral factor in the moulding of Roman character. But as knowledge increased, so did scepticism, and in the speeches of the great orators and writers of the late Republic there is a scarcely veiled contempt for the old beliefs.

Augustus was quick to see the void created in public life by the lack of religion. Whether he considered it a

dope for the ignorant or not, he certainly realised that it was an aid to good government. Therefore he exerted himself to bring about its revival. As he could not whip up a jaded horse, he looked out for a new one. It was possibly that which led him to inaugurate the worship of the deified Cæsar, which was, as we shall see, to prove the greatest obstacle to the spread of Christianity.

The old gods had run their course, or almost so. It must not be overlooked that in a way they had served a purpose in the progress of Rome. Originally its founders were a primitive people, interested only in pastoral and agricultural life. Their first adventures in religion were a form of animism, the cult of Vesta, the religion of the home and of physical reproduction. This nebulous mixture of people needed something to solidify it, to make it alive with the spirit of nationalism. Jupiter did that. He, with Juno and Minerva, was really an invasion from Etruria. It is a question at the present moment whether the Etruscans conquered the Romans. Their gods did, and brought with them a new virility. Jupiter, securely seated on the Capitol, became a centre and inspiration to patriotism. This latter passion soon welded into a nation the unorganised herdsmen and planters. Rome was born when the religion of patriotism superseded the primitive animism. Etruria all unconsciously was fashioning her own destroyer when she gave her gods to Rome. Part of the ritual was the erection of walls within which only the State gods were permitted to enter. Walls, with their assurance of strength, soon begat new

ambitions. Rome began to realise its power. This enclosure, called the Pomerium, was certainly borrowed from the Etruscans. They not only furnished the idea, but the engineers.

As we pass by, let us be just and put these things to the credit of the old gods.

Paul had little to fear from them. They were changing their coats in any case, and adopting Grecian fashions and names. Their worship had produced at least one fine flower, that of Stoicism, which had outgrown the crude beliefs which gave it birth, and in some of its highest forms of expression approached monotheism. Take, for instance, this quotation from Seneca:

"We understand Jove to be the ruler and guardian of the whole mind and breath of the Universe, lord and artificer of this fabric. Every name is his. Would you call him Fate? You will not err. He it is on whom all things depend, the cause of causes. Would you call him Providence? You will speak aright. He it is whose thought provides for the Universe, that it may move on its course unhurt and do its part. Would you call him Nature? You will not speak amiss. He it is of whom all things are born, by whose breath we live. Would you call him Universe? You will not be deceived."

While Stoicism reached this altitude, ordinary religion sank to its lowest levels. Cicero gives no hint in his writings of a personal faith in the gods. Virgil's divinities are purely literary; and Horace is frankly atheistic. The priesthood had lost its spiritual function

and become a political instrument. In many cases it was abandoned, and the very gods it was supposed to guard were forgotten. Religious festivals ceased. But while ritual waned, a purer belief, as we have just seen in the case of the Stoics, arose. Augustus made a valiant effort to bolster up dying faith. He rebuilt eighty-two temples, and re-established endowments for the worship of local deities. On the Palatine he erected a magnificent temple to Apollo, while Vesta he housed in the palace itself, and thus brought religion under the Imperial wing. In his own Forum he has left us a monument of his religion in the stately columns of the temple of Mars Ultor, the Avenger, which dominate the recent excavations. Here hung the sword of Cæsar.

Despite all that, Paul knew that the Latin deities were not his worst foes. The danger to him and to Rome came from another quarter. The East was casting its fascinating spell over the West. It was captivating its conqueror by its magic. It gave of its wisdom, its superstition, and its mystery. Three of its great religions invaded Rome, ousted the old gods—except the triad securely seated in the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol—and impassioned the multitude with a new zeal. These three were the religions of the Great Mother, Isis, and Mithra. What made them attractive was the contrast they presented to the ancient faiths. These were formal, practical, and consisted in the exact performance of ritual. Virtue was achieved by a simple observance of ceremonial. It lay in doing something external, and thus brought

THE HORREA AGRIPPIANA WITH ARCADES AND SHOPS
Above are flats, while towering above them is the Palace of Tiberius on the Palatine
(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

little spiritual satisfaction. In fact, worship had no soul in it. Its business was to avert divine wrath or win its favour, not to elevate life. With the Eastern religions it was different. They whirled the spirit up into an ecstasy by their gorgeous symbolism and frenzied incantations. Besides, they brought with them a clearer idea of eternity. In addition, they had that faith in themselves which overbore weaker and less protesting creeds. Each considered itself as the one true religion. Plutarch, echoing the declarations of Cybele's priests, says that she was "that natural cause which furnishes the seeds and beginnings of all things." Lucian saw in her the characteristics of more than half a dozen Greek goddesses, and flung the Fates also into her lap. But it is left to England to pile on the butter in most lavish style. An inscription has been found on Hadrian's wall which identifies Cybele with the Virgo Cœlestis of Carthage, giver of grain, inventress of justice, foundress of cities, and makes her the mother of many gods, and pictures her as the holder of the scales of life and law.

What is the history of this strange goddess which, like the serpent nursed in the bosom, stung its benefactor to death; which, introduced to Rome, poisoned its life and brought about its doom? One almost feels that it is a subject for a humorist, were the results not so tragic. If only those ancients had possessed that saving grace of humour, they might have laughed at themselves, and laughed themselves out of the ridiculous meshes of this silly superstition. Paul had humour, and he must have inwardly laughed

at the proud Roman, who considered himself the conqueror of the world, making such a fool of himself: only, alas, the Apostle also saw the tragedy, and his sensitive soul felt the shame of a degraded manhood.

The gods were no better than the men who made them. Cybele herself, who posed as their august mother, was below the moral standard even of that age. Attis is supposed to have been her son, with whom she fell in love. Of course, at the root of the story there are certain physical facts, such as the budding of life in spring, which doubtless gave it origin. The ancients were not scientists, and when they wished to interpret natural law they did it through the agency of myth. Attis was a man of the soil, a handsome shepherd; and so his life had a special link with nature. He proved unfaithful to Cybele, and sought to marry the daughter of the King of Pessinus; but at the critical moment, when all the guests had arrived, and when, according to our service, the question might be asked if any had objections to make, all were startled by the sudden appearance of a wrathful Cybele. She certainly had. At the sight of her, Attis fled, leaving his bride behind, ungallant lover that he was. Fear gave wings to his feet, and he did not stop until he reached the mountains. There, at the foot of a pine-tree, in despair he slew himself. An object, we would say, that deserved scorn instead of pity; but that just shows how different were the standards and mode of thought of those days from ours. The fury of the goddess was short-lived. Then came remorse. She instituted a great mourning, which took place at

the time of the vernal equinox. The cold blast of winter was past, the goddess had relaxed, and the genial smile of spring was the result. Her priests enrolled themselves in a search-party for the lost youth, and with the beating of kettledrums and blowing of fifes, started off in high feather to the mountains. Of course they succeeded. In due course they brought back the youth alive, or, as some more critical authorities assert, only his image: because they say he had already been transformed into a pine-tree. However, that detail is not of much importance. The fact that nature burst into life at their return was proof enough of the success of their mission, and they did not let the world forget it. With kettledrum and fife, and many other accessories, the priests of Cybele took credit to themselves for the arrival of every spring. Taking them at their own value, no wonder the simple Romans were grateful; for if spring did not arrive, there would be no harvests. If you beat the drum loud enough, whether it be the big one or the kettle one, human nature will respond. That is its weakness. Cybele believed in the drum. Her usual attribute is a kettledrum. She played her way to success.

As for herself, she was no beauty. She had not a head like other rational beings. She was embodied in a small, pyramidical-shaped black stone. This was stuck on to the silver statue of a female, and there she was; ready made for the proud Romans to worship.

When the Romans, in despair at not being able to pluck the thorn of Hannibal out of the leg of Italy,

turned to the Sibylline books for guidance, they were told to bring this goddess to Rome. They scraped up a friendship with Attalus, King of Pergamus. It was their first alliance with the East. It was a good bargain for Attalus. He secured the support of Rome, and in return gave a stone. What a commentary on Christ's words: "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone?"

With much pomp Cybele was brought on her voyage. But her arrival was not without its difficulties. At the very start she threw an apple of discord amongst her new friends. Her demand was that only the very best man in the State was worthy to receive her. Now the settling of that point was a delicate one, for as Livy says, every man in the State preferred a victory in such a contest as this to any commands or offices which the vote of the Senate of the people might give him. At last Publius Scipio was elected as the Sir Galahad alone worthy of handling the image.

The ruins of the old temple still remain with the headless statue of Cybele. There are fragments of fluted columns, shafts, capitals, the cornice, the upper part of the triangular frontal. How these to-day recall the words, "He hath put down the mighty from their seats." How different was the scene which Paul viewed. The temple, which was one of the most elegant in design, had been restored by Augustus. It was the only one in Rome not made of marble, but of peperino with a white stucco coating. It was approached by an imposing flight of stairs, and surrounded by a platform which gave space for the

gyrations of its frenzied worshippers. Within was the famous black stone (aerolith) said to have been dropped from the sky at Pessinus, in Galatia.

If Hannibal had inflicted no other evil on his enemies than inducing them to send for this goddess, the harm done would have been worse than all the defeats suffered on the battlefield. He left his sting in Rome when the statue of that goddess was enthroned on the Palatine. True, he never dreamed of the havoc he thus indirectly wrought. The Romans, in their extremity, sought divine aid and took a wrong turning. We can perhaps scarcely blame them when their advisers were the Sibyls. They sent for the Mother of the gods, and she came with the Furies in her train. If they ascribed victory to her presence, then its price was dearer than defeat. She sapped the moral strength of Rome, and laid the seeds of a degeneracy which cost Rome its Empire.

Roman youths and matrons, clad in white, and with purest hands, had welcomed the goddess at Ostia in 204 B.C. Imagination can play strange tricks, but it stretched itself to the limit when it projected its ideal of pure divinity on this soiled image. Well might that goddess have laughed. Only that was impossible, for she had no face, but merely a pyramidical black stone. Coming from Troy, she appealed to patrician blood; for had not the ancestors of the best families in Rome come over with Æneas from there in the equivalent of the Mayflower, or the entourage of an earlier William the Conqueror? Cybele, like a clever woman, knew the value of fashion and how to capture

it. Of course, everybody who was anybody in Rome had to claim relationship with this goddess who hailed from the ancestral seat.

If Paul were in Rome on March 22, A.D. 61, and the following days, he may have seen something of the revolting celebrations connected with the festival of Cybele and Attis. The latter was her lover, who, in the madness of his devotion, was supposed to have killed himself and on that spring day come alive again. It is more than a coincidence that the early Christians chose that same date for Easter as a commemoration of the Resurrection. How little Paul would dream that within a few hundred years Christianity would identify itself with that festival!

Claudius had recently re-established the worship of the Great Mother, and brought it under the patronage of the throne, so that it had all the éclat of popular favour. On the twenty-second, Paul might see the pine-tree, into which Attis was said to have been transformed, carried with great pomp into the temple of Cybele on the Palatine. The twenty-fourth was the great day of the feast; it was called the Day of Blood. It began with an offering on the altar from the high priest himself. He slashed his arms with a sword and presented his blood to the goddess. This was the beginning of pandemonium. The lesser priests followed suit and courted promotion by the extravagance of their zeal. To the barbaric music of clashing cymbals, rumbling drums, droning horns, and screaming flutes, the priests raised their weird chants, and flashing their knives in the air, began to hack their bodies

and bestrew the altar with their flowing blood. This oblation was meant to strengthen Attis for his task of rising from the dead. Fiercer and more furious became their dance as, whirling round and round with waggling heads and streaming hair, they cut themselves and in their ecstasy felt no pain. The excited audience caught the infection, and those who had come merely to witness, suddenly became actors in that wild riot of blood. Flinging aside their garments, they rushed to mutilate themselves and join in that delirious procession that hurried through the streets. On the twenty-fifth the tomb of the god was opened and he was hailed as risen from the grave. Then followed the Festival of Joy, when laws were laughed at and everyone for one day did as he pleased. The shadow of this can still be seen in Rome in the Carnival, though within recent years it has become a very tame affair and an onlooker would not suspect its grim pedigree. Liberty passed into licence, and under the cloak of religion the vilest deeds were wrought. On the twenty-sixth day of March there was a rest. Nature had exhausted itself and required a breathing-space before the final scene. This took place on the following day, when the whole populace turned out to witness the procession to the brook Almo, where the silver image with the black stone for a head was given a much-needed bath. But that stony face could not be washed white, though men loved to think that it was now purified and bore it back to the city with universal rejoicings.

What did Paul think as he witnessed all this?

Perhaps we get an echo of this scene in his cutting phrase to the Philippians, "whose glory is in their shame." One thing I am sure never entered his mind, that the worship of the Mother of the gods was to fasten itself on Christianity as a parasite, and while it discarded its vileness, still survived in the spirit of woman worship, and bequeathed to its successor the date of Easter. In this we see the compromise which the Church in the hour of its triumph weakly made with its conquered but still powerful rival. It is interesting to think that there is much in the ritual and teaching of one section of the Christian Church to-day which is indirectly due to Hannibal's invasion of Italy. If he had not aroused their fear, the Romans would not have been in such a hurry to welcome this Eastern goddess, whose cult was largely responsible for their own fall, and whose after-influence has introduced a weakness into the Church from which it has not yet freed itself.

The third antagonist Paul would recognise in the religion of Isis and Serapis. Every day, as I leave my house in Rome, I am faced by the shadow of that old cult. In the Piazza San Bernardo, and adorning the fountain Felice, there are four stone lions. These originally stood near the Pantheon and were transferred to their present site. Their connection with the locality of the Pantheon brings them in touch with the great temple of Isis, which once stood in that neighbourhood. They are only copies; but the originals exist and are stored in the Vatican Museum. Without a doubt these lions guarded the old temple of Isis. It

THE BASILICA ÆMILIA

Some of its columns are supposed to have been transferred to the Church of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Its courts were used as a Stock Exchange

(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

was a vast structure, the central part being four hundred and twenty feet in length, the same size as the temple of Horus, in Egypt, of which it was an imitation. It was approached by a long colonnaded court, down the two sides of which stretched rows of lions and sphinxes, placed alternately and discharging water from their mouths. At the end of these were the two world-famed sculptures of the Nile and the Tiber. The former is in the Vatican Museum, while the latter can be seen at the Louvre, in Paris.

The site of this temple can be well defined to-day. It comprised part of the present church of San Ignazio, a section of the Collegio Romano, the apse of the church of Minerva, and the Via Pie di Marmo. While the architecture was Egyptian, there were also elements of Roman style. During the excavations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, these sphinxes and lions were dug up here, also marble monkeys. Five obelisks were discovered. One of these is in Florence, the other four in Rome: in the Piazza della Minerva, in the Villa Mattei, in the Piazza del Pantheon, and one near the railway station. All these formed part of the adornment of the old temple of Isis. The exact date of its erection is not known, but it is supposed that Julius Cæsar had a soft side to this Egyptian cult. If you seek the reason, you will find the proverbial woman. In this case she was the beautiful Cleopatra. What a long shadow that fascinating woman has cast across the pages of history, and how, through the worship of Isis, she has even influenced the Christian Church!

When Egypt was made a Roman province by Augustus in 27 B.C., a large colony of Egyptians settled in Rome and brought with them their religion, just as a Roman colony settled in Alexandria and built there Roman temples. We know that the temple of Isis was standing in the Campus Martius when Paul was in the city, and that afterwards Domitian, who was greatly fascinated by its worship, spent large sums of money in further adorning it. The adjoining temple of Serapis occupied the site of the present church of San Stefano del Cacco and the offices of the Questura. It had a semicircular portico, as is seen from the plan of Severus. There was also a large rectangular court, and one can still read the word "Serapæum" on a tablet. In 1903 some remains were discovered here, including a granite column and Egyptian figures with the lotus leaf. The very name of the church which stands there to-day is a reminder of its Egyptian connection. "Cacco" is the word for the Egyptian monkey which was found in this place and which was part of the ornament of the old temple. The present street, Pie di Marmo, owes its name to the huge marble foot which was unearthed there, and which probably belonged to the colossus of Serapis. Flavius Josephus, when describing the triumph of Titus in A.D. 70, tells us that Vespasian, Titus, and Domitian passed the night near the temple of Isis.

The story of Serapis and Isis is not a very pretty one, but it has to be told if we are to understand the significance of the cult. Plutarch gives it to us, only

he calls the Egyptian god Osiris. He answers to either name. He turned out better than one would have expected from the manner of his birth. The least said about that the better. It was a scandal amongst the gods—not an uncommon affair. This reminds me of a remark made by a countrywoman who was watching a fashionable wedding and criticising the showiness of the bride: "Well, it's only once in her lifetime!" "Tuts!" replied her neighbour. "These folk ain't like us." The ancient gods had their own sense of morality, which was a mixed one. Anyhow, Seb and Nut, the earth-god and the sky-goddess, carried on as they ought not, and the result was Osiris. Then Seb ended up by marrying, not Nut, but his sister Nephthys, and thus set a bad example to his son, who filial-like followed it. When he grew up he married his sister Isis, and for a time all went well. But even amongst the gods there is some kind of retribution. Osiris was not liked. The reason was because he was too good and too successful. He ruled over Egypt and made the desert blossom as a rose. As a farmer he was a great success. Egypt attributed her subsequent prosperity to him. He was particularly skilful with his hands. He taught his subjects to train the vine to poles, and to make wine out of grapes. But he had a brother who was a practical joker of the grim order. He, too, was a god, and so was able to joke with impunity. Besides, he had seventy-two others as bad as himself. He gave a dinner-party, and in the middle of the feast brought in a coffin. I think Domitian must have taken a leaf out of his book when he

entertained the senators to dinner in his palace on the Palatine, placed a coffin beside each, and then burst into laughter when he ordered the grim reminder of death to be removed and the courses to be served.

But with Osiris it was no laughing matter, though he thoughtlessly treated it as such. Seb, his brother, cunningly suggested that they should see whom the coffin fitted. He had secretly taken exact measurements of his brother's body and the casket had been made to order. Each of the seventy-two guests tested its capacity, but it was clear that it had not been built for them. So Osiris stepped in gaily, and lay down. Then all rushed and slammed the lid on top of him and screwed him down, and soldered it with molten lead. So there was no getting out. Then they carried the coffin to the Nile and flung it in, and that was the last of Osiris—or should have been; but there was a woman in the case, Isis.

What she did and suffered in her search for her dead husband is too tall a story to relate. Even a childlike credence would shy at it, but these old idolators took it all in. She found the body at last up the trunk of a tree. Osiris having been a farmer, it was a rather suitable resting-place. Then, having got the body, she did a silly thing and lost it. Typhon found it, and to show his spite, cut it up into fourteen pieces and flung them to the ends of the earth. So Isis had to begin all over again, and this time the task was more difficult, for instead of a substantial body, she had to search for fourteen bits of it, and all in

different places. However, she went at it with a will, and found the eventual way. Then, when she had collected all the bits, she was no better off, for she was powerless to bring them to life. But a woman has always one device which is irresistible with gods and men—her tears. Ra, the sun-god, could not bear to see her weeping, so he sent Anubis, the jackal-headed god, down to make her stop; and he soon saw that the only way to do that was to let her have her way. As the quickest method of ending the matter, he helped her to restore Osiris to life, by first embalming the body and then allowing Isis to fan the cold clay into life with her wings. Osiris lived to become sovereign over the departed spirits. Such is the story with many blanks which are best left unfilled. Its childishness must have aroused Paul's indignation.

The ritual made a success of the story, otherwise it would have been a failure. You will admit that at best it is a very second-rate tale. But just as actors can make a poor plot a live thing, so the priests, with their imposing ceremonies, gave flesh and colour to a rather dried skeleton. After all, it shows us what dress can do, especially when it becomes the fashion; and Isis made a bid for that, much to the chagrin of Cybele, who must have turned from black to green as she watched, from the Palatine, Domitian bestowing his money on her rival.

Isis knew how to dress her shop-windows and attract the crowd. By separating her priests from the world, she conveyed the impression of a special sanctity, which aroused popular interest; for sanctity

was an uncommon thing in those days. Then she had them tonsured, and the little bald patch on the head awakened curiosity. Rome was to get accustomed to that sight, and from the first days that the priests of Isis walked her streets, she has not lacked a tonsured clergy, though they donned a Christian garb.

Isis introduced the use of holy water, which custom was also to remain. Every morning her priest made a round of the altars, reciting the litany and sprinkling them with drops from the secret spring. The Romans were impressed. A fresco from Herculaneum gives us a picture of the adoration of the holy water. A priest is seen standing in the most hallowed spot and lifting up a sacred urn for the adoration of the multitude. From the altar rises the smoke of sacrifice, while two choirs are chanting to the accompaniment of the seistron and the flute.

Much mystery was made about the revealing of the image. Isis knew how to work on the feelings of the crowd. The worshippers stood in awe, while the white-robed priest slowly ascended a hidden stair. A bell tinkled. There was a solemn hush. Slowly the curtains were drawn aside, and the image of the goddess was exposed for a few moments' adoration. Perfect stage management! is our comment. No wonder Isis carried all before her, and despite opposition at first became a ruling deity in Rome; and one even suspects that her reign is not yet quite over!

Paul came to cast down the mighty from their seats. He was not going to oppose ritual to ritual, to

outbid a rival by greater dexterity in displaying his wares. He presented truth shorn of all trimmings, and trusted solely in its power. Time has proved him right. Truth has no need of artificial helps, and in fact is only retarded by them. God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit, and in truth.

Yet Isis has not completely vanished. Her shadow can still be recognised where least expected. The statue of the Madonna and Child, with which we are so familiar, is almost an exact repetition of that of Isis with her infant son Horus which adorned her temples. But perhaps the most curious of all is that she has bequeathed a name to one of the great courts of the Vatican, the Cortile della Pigna. There, in front of Bramante's famous apse, stands a colossal bronze pine-cone. It was discovered in the Middle Ages near the baths of Agrippa, and is now known to have formed the crowning part of the great fountain of the temple of Isis. Water spurted out from all its fine points. This cone has evidently had ambitions. It wished to occupy the chief place in the most magnificent temple in the capital of the world. It changed its allegiance with the mode of the times. When Isis disappeared, like the Vicar of Bray it donned another coat, and now it still stands in the centre of the greatest ecclesiastical edifice of the world! "Bravo, Pine-cone!" we exclaim. "You know how to keep your place in the sun!"

A more formidable antagonist, however, than any of these, Paul recognised in Mithra. The Apostle's lot

had been thrown much amongst soldiers, and especially those on Eastern service. Mithra had captured the army, and Paul would hear from the lips of these veterans the wonders of this new religion, and his quick intuition would soon discern that between it and Christianity there would be a struggle to the death. It was more than a religion; it was an Orientalism which threatened Europe with a greater danger than did Mohammedanism in later ages. Its voluntary missionaries outstripped even those of the Cross, and by the middle of the third century had outdistanced the Christians.

It was Mithraism which, gathering to itself the strongest elements in all the other pagan faiths, welded them into a system and proved itself the greatest rival to Christianity. Possibly it borrowed a cloak from the Church under which to win an entrance into the fold of believers. Tertullian and other early Christian apologists have no hesitation in accusing it of this. If they are right, then the Church in turn did the same thing. It stole from Mithra the fringes he had added to its sacrament. If it be true that Mithra took the sacred rite of the consecrated bread and water mingled with wine from the early Church, then it was from his worship that the Church adopted in later ages the practice of refusing the cup to the laity. Only to the highest grades in that pagan cult was the cup offered. It was supposed to impart a secret virtue which might even elude the grasp of death. Thus Christianity took over from Mithraism a certain magical sacramentalism. It did not entirely

THE TOP OF THE FORUM

Where the triumphs passed up towards the Capitol. On the left is the Temple of Saturn and in front those of Vespasian and Concord

(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

resist the inroad of pagan ideas, and owing to this laxity sacerdotalism shot up rapidly and has never since been weeded out.

Three temples of Mithra, in excellent preservation, can now be seen at Rome and Ostia. Let us visit the last first, for it contains some things which help to give a good general idea of this mysterious cult. The recent excavations at Ostia are revealing to the world a second Pompeii, and astonishing the modern world by this exhibition of the artistic skill and engineering capacity of the ancient one.

In one of the highest streets, we stop in front of a low door. We have to bow our heads to enter, and then find ourselves in a passage sloping downwards into semi-darkness. As the eyes grow accustomed to the gloom, we see that we are in a temple. It is bared now of much of its impressive adornment, but we can still feel that eeriness which the novitiate must have experienced when with hesitating step he entered that centre of mystery.

The Podia on which the worshippers knelt or reclined along both sides of the temple are still intact. On them are traced the signs of the zodiac, and the divinities of the planets, Venus, Saturn, Mars, etc. These in themselves form a kind of hall-mark indicating the birthplace and date of origin of this strange religion. At once we are carried back in imagination to those far-off days when the star-gazers on the banks of the Ganges or the Euphrates dreamed dreams, and in the solemn splendour of the nightly fires which shone in the heavens saw signs of forces which directed

human destinies. They saw more. They could not look into those liquid depths of space which stretched to infinities without experiencing an uplift of soul. The eternity within the heart responded to the infinity without, and begot the idea of *immortality*. Thus was born the great hope of men; and through all the strange vicissitudes of the cult of Mithra, the one thing which kept it alive, which buoyed it up when overladen with superstitions, which enabled it to survive the greatest pagan faiths, and even at the end to surrender to Christianity with what might be called the honours of war, was the hope of immortality which underlay all its rites and teaching.

As we stand there in the gloom and look at those carvings on the Podia, we realise what a long, long way Mithra has come. Babylon left its impress; but Mithra was old before Babylon existed. Scratch him and you will always find the Persian. Out of an Aryan haze he floats, hoary with age, yet with his ancient doctrine of life from death, of a soul which though dying lives.

Now let us look round and examine some of the other mysteries which have left their strange marks in that temple. On the floor one can see clearly the curved lines denoting the seven grades through which the neophyte rose to full communion. They are: Corax, Cryphius, Miles, Leo, Perses, Heliodromus, and Pater. What strange rites were associated with each it is impossible to say. The ritual of Mithra has been lost. Some day it may be discovered, unless it was filed only in the memory of its priests. Porphyry

seems to think that the first three grades had to be passed before the neophyte was really initiated. Until he reached "Leo," he did not win the toga of his religious manhood. The highest dignity of all, that of Pater or Pope, was no empty title. The Pope of Mithraism held sovereignty over the bodies as well as the souls of his brethren. What sinister powers he had, we can only guess at; but the novitiate was certainly imbued with a holy fear and reverence for his Pope.

Possibly the seven circles had a connection with the seven planets pictured on the Podia. These, without doubt, symbolised the seven spheres through which the soul passed on its journey to the earth. As it descended, it lost something at each stage and became more earthly. These were chambers in which it divested itself of its spiritual garments, until, when it had reached the last sphere, almost nothing was left of its heavenly nature; whereas it had assumed at each stage faculties to fit it for human life. The reverse was also true; and here perhaps we stumble on the genesis of Purgatory. On its release from life, the soul retraces its way back through the seven spheres. Not at once is it fit to return to the region of ethereal purity. It must ascend stage by stage. At each stop it gets rid of some earthly sin, until at last it has reached the seventh sphere, when its purification is complete.

Just as the doctrine of Purgatory opens the door for much abuse and is the cause of much corruption which has crept in, so in the case of Mithra its

elaboration became a very doubtful blessing. The purer creed was buried under a benumbing superstition. Mithra had to thank his conquest of Babylon for that. Had he been content to stay in his native Persia, the purity of his creed might have been maintained, but Babylon corrupted him, as it did most things.

The altar and the marble group of Mithra and the bull are no longer in this old temple at Ostia, and to get further enlightenment in this worship we must visit the wonderfully preserved Mithraic temple under the Basilica of St. Clement, in Rome. While the house of this saint may have existed in Paul's time, and he may often have been a visitor within its walls, the temple of Mithra was not erected there until after the martyrdom of St. Clement, during the reign of Trajan. Then seemingly this house was confiscated to the State and used possibly as barracks for troops, who naturally brought their religion with them, and housed it under the same roof. Here other details of that mysterious cult can be studied. The dome of rock suggests the origin of the god, who on December 25th rose out of a rock. He shares the honour with Saturn of bequeathing the Festival of Christmas to the Christians. You see him here with the Phrygian cap, and thereby hangs a tale. It reveals the secret of his success, and perhaps also of his failure. It was compromise. He accommodated himself to other religions and appropriated what was best in them for himself. The Phrygian cap he stole as he journeyed westward. It really belonged to Attis,

but Mithra has made more use of it, and given it lasting fame. The *taurobolium* also he filched from Phrygia, and this baptism of blood proved very attractive to the Roman soldier. There was a depth of mystery and suggestion in it that fascinated the Westerner. Altogether, Mithra must be regarded as a great thief. Perhaps Paul already detected that in this god, and feared for his own priceless treasure of truth. He had good cause, for soon this light-fingered deity turned covetous eyes on the wares this Apostle had brought to Rome, and purloined what suited him.

The marble group of Mithra and the bull in the Vatican Museum is perhaps the most perfect extant. The god is seen in his supreme act of driving home the dagger into the neck of the bull. The blood rushes to nourish the earth, but there are enemies in the path in the shape of the serpent and the scorpion, who, with something of the spirit of Mithra himself, try to steal the life-giving flood. The dog, however, the friend of gods and men, plays up and does his bit, this time with an "e"; for he bites ferociously these foes, and gives the blood a chance to reach the ground and enrich the soil, out of which sprouts the corn.

Paul, as he talked with his guards, would soon begin to measure this new force. It was a picture-book of nature, and therefore had an attraction for the unsophisticated mind. The bull, the stars, the cave had the lure of realism about them. But what gave it going-power was the truth of eternal life embedded

in its mysteries. Here the old faiths of Rome had failed, while Mithra hitched his wagon to a star. Again, the spirit of brotherhood appealed. There was something almost Christian about it. All were equal in that fellowship, the tribune and the private. After the rigid discipline of the army, the soldier felt a relaxation in that new comradeship under the protection of the god. Besides, he served another need. The great spirit of all things, Ormuzd, seemed so far away, out of touch with mortals, that a go-between was welcomed. Mithra offered himself as that. He was a mediator between the gods and men.

Paul noted the danger of all this. The very strength of Mithra lay in the similarity of his teaching to that of Paul in many things; but one thing he lacked, and that was heart. Paul came with his story of a bleeding heart at the centre of creation, and he knew that its truth and power would in the end win the devotion of men.

The fifth opposing force was, however, to prove the most threatening of all. That was the worship of the Emperors. It had its roots far back, even before the time of Julius Cæsar. Philip of Macedon had a temple raised to his honour at Olympia. Alexander the Great followed suit, and thus sowed the seed which was to produce such bitter fruit for the early Christians. The Ptolemies followed the example set and had themselves regarded as deities. Asia, however, seems to have been the natural home of this new doctrine, perhaps because there is less backbone in Eastern character than Western, and therefore more syco-

phancy. Anyhow, Europe has been indebted to Asia for many diseases as well as other things, and the infection of this one moved westwards. Cicero hurled his darts of ridicule against this new heresy, but in vain. This creed was too tough even for derision.

Julius Cæsar, on his return to Rome in 46 B.C., after his victories over Pompey and Ptolemy, had a statue erected to him with the inscription, "Cæsar, the demi-god." That was the thin edge. The whole of the wedge quickly followed. His image was placed amongst the gods at a banquet to their honour. Temples began to be dedicated to Cæsar's clemency. Having got that length, the step to divinity was the next. Cæsar, who himself was sceptical on religious matters, yet favoured this new homage. It had its political worth.

The stars in their courses fought for him, even after he was dead. In the spring of 44 B.C., about a month or so after Cæsar's assassination, a comet appeared in the heavens. This proved fortunate evidence for Octavius, who hailed it as a proof that Julius had been admitted to a place amongst the gods. At once a statue to the new divinity was erected in the temple of Venus, with a golden star over its head. The Julian family claimed Venus as their great ancestress, therefore the site for the statue was a fitting one. An altar was built and sacrifices offered on the spot in the Forum where Cæsar's body had been burned. In 42 B.C. the Senate passed this decree: "To the genius of the divine Julius, father of his country, whom the Senate and the Roman people have placed amongst

the number of the gods." The beautiful marble temple, whose ruins we see to-day, was completed in 29 B.C., and from that date the formal State religion of the worship of the Emperors may be said to start.

Augustus saw that the State needed the moral cement of religion; but with such a selection of gods to choose from he was faced with what may have seemed a plethora of riches. On examination, however, not one of these was suitable for his purpose. The most popular were foreign, the others were insular. He must have a religion which would embrace every part of the Empire. It must be Roman, patriotic, and universal. The applause with which the deification of Julius Cæsar was hailed gave him a suggestion. Why not make that the universal worship? Sometimes a man becomes the victim of his own machine. It was not so easy to guide the new emotions he aroused. When there was a popular gush of pious sentiment towards Augustus himself, he was shocked. This was not what he wanted. Yet he could not prevent chapels and temples and even priesthoods being dedicated to him. He had no desire to be a god in his lifetime, the responsibilities of an emperor were enough. For the provincials who did not see their god in flesh and blood every day, it was a different matter, and Augustus allowed an edict to be issued, in response to requests from Bithynia, that in the provinces worship was to be offered to "Rome and Augustus," while in the city itself it was to be restricted to the deified Julius.

THE BASILICA JULIA

Planned by Julius Cæsar during his campaigns, and opened by him in 46 B.C. Here in all likelihood took place Paul's second trial, and his condemnation to death

(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

Augustus found in this new religion a happy means of uniting the separate cities and States of the Empire. Greek culture and ideals had failed to do this. It had made citizens proud of their own town, but did not link them up with a wider domain. Augustus showed his skill as an empire-builder in introducing this new bond. The very name he chose for himself, "Augustus," Mommsen thinks has a religious significance, with its suggestion of one who should be revered or worshipped. He assumed this title not as a personal one, but as a designation of his office as ruler. He meant the State, as personified in its ruler, to be a subject for veneration. He practised a little delusion, for which we must forgive him, when he made it appear that it was not himself but the State which men should reverence. As was natural, of the twin gods Rome and Augustus, the former gradually dropped out. It could not grant honours and favours like a reigning person. Then began the long line of deified emperors, though to the credit of the Senate it must be said it drew the line at deifying Tiberius, Caligula, and Nero after they were dead. During their lifetime it was a different matter. The nod of the god was too significant.

The most imposing monument of this new faith in the time of Paul was the newly completed temple of Augustus, which, though founded by Tiberius, was not finished until the reign of Caligula. It quite overshadowed, perhaps, the more chaste but less ornate temple of Julius Cæsar. The walls of the cells contained niches for colossal statues of the emperors. In the centre stood two of Augustus and Livia, his wife. By

decree of the Senate, Livia was appointed priestess to her deceased husband. A college was also instituted, known as the Augustales, whose special function was to maintain the Imperial cult in all parts of the Empire.

The organisation of this priesthood has an historical interest, for it first developed the hierarchical system which later was adopted by the Church. At its head was the Pontifex Maximus, who was the Emperor. Then under him were the Metropolitans, who had each charge of a province. These were held in great honour. On coming to Rome they were always permitted to have an audience with the Emperor, special seats were assigned to them at all public spectacles, and at State functions they had the right to sit next the legate of the Emperor. Lictors preceded them. They wore a distinctive dress with a purple band.

Only one class was exempted from sacrificing to the Emperor, and that was the Jews. They owed this to the friendliness of Julius Cæsar, and Augustus carried on the same tradition; but all others had to conform. They might be worshippers of as many gods as they liked. Rome was broad enough not to interfere with that; but one thing they had to do, they must offer sacrifice to the Emperor. That became the supreme test which was to send so many Christians to the bloody arena.

Paul's keen eye must have seen the lurking danger. Of all the forces which opposed, he would recognise this as the deadliest. Yet as he surveyed those five

formidable trenches, where paganism had dug itself in, he was yet undismayed. We marvel at his courage and his hope. The secret lay in his faith. He trusted in the promise, "Not by might nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord."

CHAPTER THREE

SURPRISES IN THE EARLY CHURCH IN ROME

THE title which first suggested itself for this chapter was, "The Most Interesting Church in History"; but it would have challenged criticism, perhaps aroused resentment. Many of my readers, no doubt, belong to famous congregations, which are doing great things in the world to-day, and which have a membership that would make the Church of St. Paul's time in Rome appear numerically insignificant, therefore I must discard the adjective "most generous" or "most influential"; but there is one word I shall not yield, and that is, "most surprising." When I read with gratification the annual reports of our great city churches, and scan their long membership rolls and subscription lists, I say to myself: "Well, that is just what I expected. They have done splendidly, but they had it in them. With such a pastor and people they could not do otherwise."

When, however, I study the first Christian Church in Rome, I get a series of shocks. Everything is so unexpected. This Church does not conform to the rules. It surprises you by its lack of conventionality at every turn. It is so different from the pattern of to-day that I am almost tempted to dub St. Paul a Nonconformist! Let us note some of those surprising features

which may perhaps make us a little uncomfortable and lessen our pride in things which were our boast. Its founder is unknown. We are accustomed to a big tablet in the vestibule commemorating the name of some great preacher who had started the cause which had grown into a flourishing congregation, or perhaps that of some generous donor, whose money had laid the foundation-stone. I do not condemn such a custom. There is an inspiration in great names, and they are "on Fame's eternal bead-roll worthy to be filed." But this Church in Rome could put up no such tablet; for the person who originated it has not even handed down his name. It was not St. Paul. He certainly does not claim that honour. With regard to Corinth, it was different. He asserted a parental claim over that Church; but with Rome, no. It was not St. Peter, for when he appeared in the city there was already a strong Church established. Who, then, were its originators?

We must search for them amongst the Jewish colony. From the days of Pompey the Great, this foreign community had steadily increased in size. Julius Cæsar fostered it. On the very day in which he was murdered, a great act of Jewish emancipation was passed by the Senate granting them a free administration of their own funds and a complete jurisdiction over their own members. No wonder that for three days the Jews turned the Forum into a weeping-place and bewailed the Great Cæsar who had proved himself their friend. We read that in 4 B.C., eight thousand Roman Jews met a deputation

from Palestine to Augustus. This may be an exaggeration; still, if we put their population at sixty thousand, it was not impossible; and Sejanus, who was their enemy in the time of Tiberius, enrolled four thousand in a foreign legion and sent them to Sardinia to put down the brigands. It was from this colony in the capital that in A.D. 29 we read there came to the Feast of Pentecost, "sojourners from Rome, both Jews and proselytes." That is as near as we can get to the founders of the Church. From that group of travellers some came back Christians.

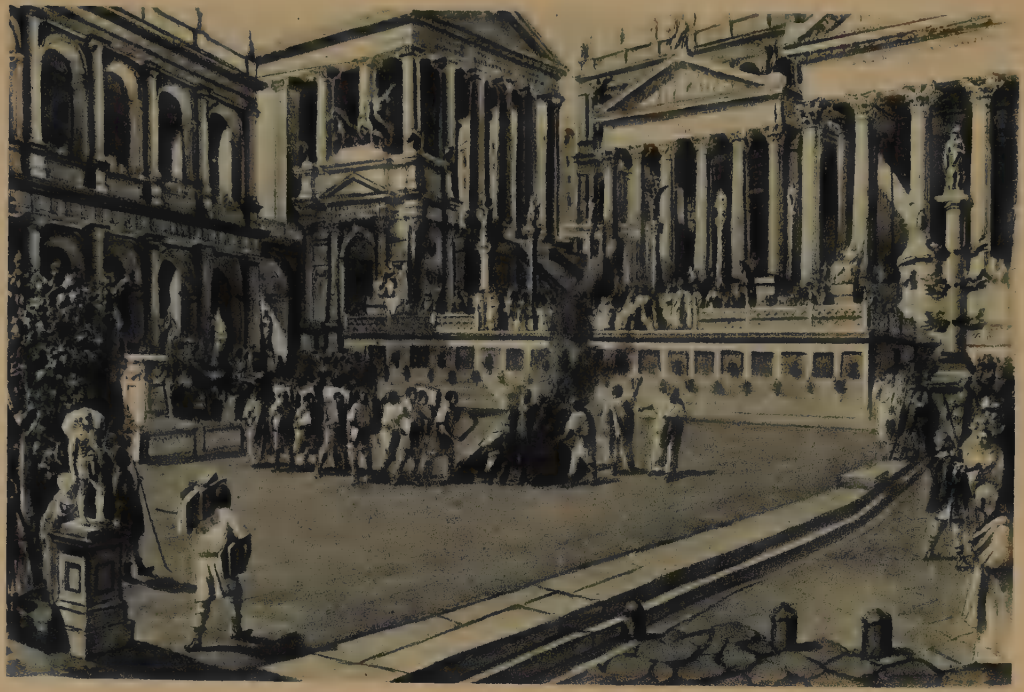
"Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which have come to pass there in these days?" said the two disciples to Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Behind these words lies a suggestive fact. Jerusalem was full of talk about Calvary, and into that babble of tongues came those Jews from Rome. Their curiosity must have been aroused, their interest excited, and in one or two hearts the truth accepted. The meaning of the Cross was seen in its true light, and when they got back to Rome, they told their friends, and so the Church in Rome began and grew, and fulfilled the prediction in the Parable of the Leaven.

Its second surprising feature is that its first success was achieved through a disturbance. Church quarrels are the saddest, but even they are often overruled for good. That may seem a poor consolation when a congregation splits; but history, in addition to the famous case of Barnabas and Paul, has many instances when the devil was caught in his own net.

One day in A.D. 52 the Emperor Claudius was looking out of his window on the Palatine. Beneath lay the magnificent arena of the Circus Maximus, but it was not that which attracted his attention. On the other side rose the slopes of the Aventine, and where now stands the church of St. Prisca stood a humble Roman house. It was the home of a Jewish tent-maker called Aquila; but one reading between the lines in the New Testament might fairly conjecture that it was run by his wife Priscilla, as her name is often put first. She seems to have been the dominating spirit. Whether she had anything, however, to do with the row must be guesswork. It became alarming enough to rivet the Emperor's gaze. A tumult in the streets of Rome had always to be watched. One never knew what it might turn to. The shouts of angry voices carried across the little valley. The crowd increased, blows were following words. The whole of the Aventine seemed in an uproar. Suetonius, in his History, tells us the cause. He says it was a tumult about one "Chrestos." The Jews were arguing in their usual way. Their bark may have been worse than their bite, but how was Claudius to know? The thing must be stopped at once. He dealt with it as one might with a dog-fight in one's house, by kicking both combatants out. He was going to have no more disturbances of that kind, so he passed an edict that all Jews were to be expelled from Rome at once. Of course, that included the little Christian community as well, for the authorities looked upon them as a Jewish sect.

At that time this may have seemed a great disaster, but scattering fire often only increases it. Aquila and Priscilla went as far as Corinth, and there they met Paul, and that was a turning-point in the fortunes of the Roman Church. I am convinced that his new friends fanned his desire to visit Rome. In the long nights in Corinth they talked about it. They would take no refusal; Paul must come to the Eternal City. I think Priscilla was a lady who got her way. She has left her mark on Scripture, and even Paul's will would be bent by hers. She was determined that the Apostle should visit her city. She made him promise, and he kept his word, though it meant five years as a prisoner. That, at least, is my reading of the story.

But that controversy on the Aventine had a more far-reaching result than the cruel temporary expulsion of the Jews from Rome. When Paul eventually came to Rome, he invited the leaders of the Jews, who had now returned, to meet him. They came; but however hostile most of them felt, they curbed their passions. They could not risk another tumult and another summary expulsion; the memory of Claudius was still too vivid, so they behaved themselves, and Paul had peace. If it had not been for the former disturbance with its disastrous sequel, they would have imperilled the work and the very life of the Apostle; but the salutary lesson of Claudius had taught them restraint. So the religious dispute of A.D. 52 bore fruit in A.D. 60. Had it not been for that previous tumult about one "Chrestos," Paul might never have got a chance in Rome. I do not wish to



THE ARCH OF TIBERIUS AND ROSTRA OF THE ROMAN FORUM
The scene represents the burning of the records of the Tax and Revenue Office, a quick and happy relief!
(*Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi*)

put a premium on Church disputes, but their sequel is often a surprise.

Another matter for astonishment is the lack of central organisation. After twenty-eight years of existence, no deacons or presbyters! This takes our breath away to-day. We cannot think of a Church without its framework of intricate organisation. From the pastor down to the sub-secretary of the most juvenile society, there is a mass of human machinery which demands an expert to understand. The Roman Church does not seem to have had even a pastor or ruling elder or leading member. Otherwise Paul would not have addressed it as he did. When he writes it a letter, he does not label it as we would expect: "To the Church of God that is in Rome." He singles out no bishop or minister. He directs his letter to no central organisation, but: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints."

As we read the Epistle, we detect traces of five different congregations in the city. Two of these, as I shall mention presently, may perhaps be considered as one. This would leave four separate centres where the Christians forgathered.

The most prominent was doubtless the home of Aquila and Priscilla on the Aventine. Its site has been definitely fixed. "Greet the church that is in their house," writes the Apostle. Those simple words picture the scene. During the week, the atrium of that house would present a busy scene. Aquila was evidently a prosperous tent-maker and able to employ workmen. Their benches and tables would fill the little court;

but on Saturday night Priscilla would take command. There would be what is called in Scotland "a reddin' up." The tables would be removed, the place thoroughly scrubbed out, and benches arranged for the coming Lord's Day. Then in twos and threes little groups would be seen climbing the Aventine and wending their way to that hospitable door. How packed it would be later when Paul himself was the preacher! In fact, we are told how he discoursed from morning till night with the Jews, and one may be pretty certain that this was the spot of that historic meeting. In so far as the five distinct congregations had any common centre, I should be inclined to look upon this house as that place. Yet it did not dominate the others to such an extent that Paul should address his letter to it as representing all. The organisation at that time was purely congregational.

"Salute them which are of Aristobulus' household"; "Greet them that be of the household of Narcissus": these messages may refer to the saints in Cæsar's household. As these names have been found on the lists of the Imperial staff, it is just possible they are one and the same, and that their circle constituted the little church in the Imperial Palace. A few months ago, Professor Bartoli opened up the interior of an early Christian sanctuary under the Villa Mills on the Palatine in the precincts of the palace of Augustus, which he is at present exploring. During the Middle Ages it had been used as a wine-cellar; but he is certain it was a meeting-place for Christians in Cæsar's palace.

"Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them." These words take us out to the recently discovered "House of Hermes" on the Appian Way. Without doubt this was one of the earliest meeting-places of the Christians. Lying in a hollow, it had the advantage of not being too conspicuous; and being outside the walls, was more private. It formed a convenient centre for a considerable Christian community in that neighbourhood.

About two miles out of Rome, along the Via Appia, after passing the catacombs of St. Callixtus, one descends into a little hollow. At the very bottom, on the right, stands the ancient church of St. Sebastian. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries it was a great centre for pilgrimages, as it was in the days of Constantine, when it was first built. It is one of the seven churches to which the pious still make peregrinations.

The modern tourist, however, has largely passed it by, because during the Middle Ages its catacombs were despoiled of their inscriptions and treasures, and do not compare in interest with those of its neighbour, St. Callixtus. But St. Sebastian will come to its own again. This will be brought about as soon as the facts of the recent discoveries underneath its foundations become more widely known.

The first attempts made to excavate under this church began in 1892. It was originally called the Basilica of the Apostles, because of the tradition which affirmed that during the Valerian persecution (253–60)

the bodies of St. Peter and St. Paul were brought for concealment to a vault in this place. In fact, up to A.D. 1612 a medieval altar stood in the church over where it was supposed the bodies had been laid. This awakened controversy, and in the year 1915 a renewed effort was made to find if there was any fact behind the tradition. At the expense of Monsieur de Waal, and under the direction of Dr. P. Styger, explorations were carried out. It was found that under the church, which had been built about the middle of the fourth century, there was an old Roman house with a row of tombs in front. These date from the first and second centuries. The work was interrupted for some years and then renewed in 1919 with the help of a band of Austrian prisoners. On the walls of an upper chamber there are written a number of prayers addressed to St. Peter and St. Paul, and sometimes signed by the suppliant, such as "Petre et Paule petite pro Native in perpetuum": "Paule et Petre petite pro Victore": "Petre et Paule in mente habete Sozomenum." These *graffiti* belong to the second half of the third and the beginning of the fourth centuries.

This house was literally stumbled on by "Brother Damiano," the Franciscan monk with the pleasant smile, who shows you what he discovered and how. He is a small man; if he were otherwise, the world might still have been ignorant of this house in whose rooms Paul may often have sat, and of the frescoes still on the walls at which he may have looked.

Brother Damiano was commissioned to dig a grave

for a fellow-Franciscan. He worked hard and dug deep, and when he had almost finished, fell right through the bottom into dark space. He had penetrated the roof of the baptistry of this old house. By a few inches he escaped falling into the well, which is still full of water, and thus following a little farther his dead brother whose grave he had been digging! Indeed, he tells us that for the moment he was not sure that he had not done so. To go through the bottom of a grave suddenly into utter darkness was rather disconcerting for a humble monk whose mind had been bred on the orthodoxy of the Middle Ages.

When he came to himself he had much ado to find his grave again, and through it to crawl his way back to the upper world, leaving behind a little round hole, which may yet be seen. Brother Damiano did a good day's work when in humble service he sought to perform the last act of kindness for his departed brother. "Thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority." To-day that text finds another corroboration, for this monk is the happiest guide I ever met, as with the enthusiasm of a discoverer he marshals his daily queue of tourists and leads them down to the depths—not by the way of the hole, but by a modern staircase; and learned professors from all over the world are content to elbow their way as near him as possible to hang upon his words. To the humble in heart the vision comes. Brother Damiano is not spoilt. Some give him twenty lire, some two; but he beams alike on all. Only it is better not to contradict him.

The inscriptions on the walls are Brother Damiano's children. Therefore do not try to strangle them with some cynical and sceptical witticism, as I have heard thoughtless visitors do, whose knowledge of Paul and Peter is but hazy remembrance of Sunday School days.

The excavations are now lit with electric light, and the way is made easy for the modern tourist. The inscriptions are recognised as belonging to the third century, if not earlier. They are in the little chamber before you make the final descent, and consist of prayers of many pilgrims, who have visited a spot which had become sacred to the members of the early Church. They are addressed to Peter and Paul, and establish the early tradition that this spot was closely associated with the memory of these apostles, for there seems no other plausible explanation.

Descending about thirty feet, one reaches the old level of first-century days. The spades of the workmen have already uncovered enough to make clear the large House of Hermes. A great deal has still to be done, but perhaps the most interesting part is revealed. This consists in the gateway to the mansion with its tombs. These, as the custom of that day was, were situated at the entrance.

In a flash, as one stands there with uncovered head, that far-off yesterday is brought under the focus of to-day. "Salute Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren which are with them," repeats our monk from Paul's Epistle to the Romans. The church of that time takes form in our

minds as the roll-call is uttered, and we see its members enter through that very portal, perhaps to listen to a discourse from Paul himself, or perhaps from St. John.

I suspect that the "apostle of love" was in Rome. Of course, we have Tertullian's reference to him having been plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil in this city; but there are always critics who question our faith. However, as we stand before one of these tombs, we have the evidence of our eyes.

This house, with its inscription that it belonged to Hermes and was the home of his freedmen and slaves, whom he had liberated, dates from the early half of the first century. It was first pagan and became Christian with its master. One can still trace the remains of pagan adornment in one of the chambers.

That being so, we may take it that its frescoes, which are about the earliest representations of Christian art which exist, would likely be painted when Hermes became a Christian. That was before A.D. 58, when the Epistle to the Romans was written in Corinth.

On the ceiling of one of these chambers there is some remarkable moulding in plaster. You see there the vine and its branches with its clusters of grapes. This is suggestive of the Christian faith. In fact, this may be the first instance of the vine so being used for Christian decoration. Later it became a common symbol.

Only one apostle preserved this parable of Christ's, and he was St. John. But as yet his Gospel had not been written. How came it, then, that his words made

such a deep impression on the Roman Christians? They might have been brought at second hand by some traveller from Jerusalem. If, however, St. John had come himself, and related with his own lips that message of the Master which had so gripped his own soul and memory, and in that very house had talked of the vine and its branches, then, when he had gone, we can easily imagine Hermes, in remembrance of his visitor, picturing in plaster the sermon which St. John had so delighted to preach. I cannot look on that ornamentation without feeling that the apostle of love has left his shadow in Rome on that ceiling.

The adjoining chambers are full of interest. Here we find both pagan and Christian decoration. The reason for this may be found in the inscription above the door, in which Hermes states that when seventy-five years of age he gave freedom to his slaves and to their children. Presumably it was at that age that he became a Christian.

It is interesting to note what sayings of Christ were first illustrated, for here we have some of the earliest Christian pictures. The conversion of Hermes must have been considerably before A.D. 58, or else he would not have been mentioned in the Epistle to the Romans. So that (on this hypothesis) here, within thirty-five years of their utterance, we have the words of Jesus transferred to frescoes.

On the ceiling is a representation of the sower of the seed. We see a strong husbandman with his arm outstretched, walking through his field. A quaint feature of this picture is the attempt to represent the

ENTRANCE TO THE TEMPLES OF ISIS AND SERAPIS

In the foreground is the great fountain twenty-five yards in circumference, guarded by four marble lions. In its centre is a ship

(*Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi*)

fruit as well as the sowing. Below you see depicted the different types produced—the indifferent man, the shallow Christian, and the various grades of true men. The application was not left out in that first sermon in colour!

On one wall is a very fine fresco representing the Parable of the Ten Virgins, while opposite to it is a picture of the Judgment of Solomon. The adjoining tomb still retains some of its pagan adornment. There are figures of the peacock, symbolic of eternal life. Possibly this was finished before the conversion of Hermes.

Much in this most interesting spot has yet to be excavated. This summer (1929) the lower parts have been drained, and thus tiers on tiers of graves, as well as mosaic floors, have been brought to view. There one sees on a shelf of rock the bodies of the early Christians still lying as they were buried. The front of the tomb has fallen in, and the skeletons are exposed to view. Here we actually look on the remains of the Christians who constituted the first Church in Rome. These were the people to whom Paul wrote his great letter. We can imagine those very feet which we see lying so peacefully there, walking to this spot on some Sabbath morning. In twos and threes those worshippers would stroll out on the Appian Way, until nearing the monument of Cecilia Metella, which still stands there, they turned aside in the little hollow, and entered the hospitable home of Hermes.

As they returned, I can imagine them talking in

wonder about the message of the Epistle from the great Apostle. Certain passages they might not be able fully to grasp, for it is strong meat. Yet the Apostle knew his audience, or else he would not have written them as he did. There must have been amongst them men of keen intellect who grasped his subtle truths. There were also unlearned slaves. In the mind of such a one I could fancy words like these would stick: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

As that Church member neared the gate of Rome, he would see sights which might well make his heart despair.

> Slaves were the swarming multitudes of Rome,
> Having no hope, no thought of better doom;
> Fettered in body and enslaved in mind,
> Their mental eyeballs sear, and dark, and blind,
> They crawled mere brutes; and if they dared
> complain,
> Were lashed and tortured until tame again.

Then the gloom would disappear as there would come into his memory the words he had heard that morning in the House of Hermes: "Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound," and with buoyant step he would return to his master and his toil. Thus would the Sabbath hour in this house brace those slaves for the drudgery of the week.

> The Sabbath is a bridge between two shores,
> White arched, strong girded. Loud on either side,
> Down to the border of the silver tide,
> Eager and fain, the noise of traffic roars,

Then falls to silence. Not an echo frets
The lofty span, nor any garish light
Nor sordid shadow flecks that quiet height
To stain at all its snowy parapets.
Caught in a safe, high calm 'twixt strife and strife,
A little while our hearts are holden here;
Our souls, like tranquil pilgrims softly shod,
Halt, and forget the weariness of life,
And leaning, find sweet heaven mirrored clear
In the still river of the rest of God.

"Salute Philologus, and Julia, Nereus, and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints which are with them." In what part of Rome this house was we cannot say. It was obviously not in the Jewish quarter.

From all this it is clear that Rome, which in later ages was to become a centre of autocracy for the Church, at this time lacked those elements of concentration which were eventually to raise her to the perilous heights of spiritual power and pride. Such organisation as she possessed was simpler in form than that of the Churches of Asia.

Another surprise awaits us when we examine carefully the roll of that first Church and note the nationality of its members. Born and bred, as they were, amongst the Jews, we should expect Jewish names to predominate. Yet, if the list given is a true sample of the rest, we are amazed to find how few there are of Hebrew origin. All this casts light on the bitterness of that tumult which Claudius witnessed. The Jews did not make an open attack again on the

Christians; but they drew apart. Prejudice hardened their hearts. They would have nothing to do with "Chrestos." Only five mentioned are clearly Hebrews. Of these, three are said to be the kinsmen of Paul: Andronicus, Junias, and Herodion, leaving Aquila and Mary only as the independent representatives of their race, though one might perhaps include Apelles. Priscilla was more than likely a Roman, as her name indicates, and her character too; for there was evidently a good deal of the Roman matron about her!

What about the sixty thousand Jews? Was ever a communion roll more condemnatory of a race than that which we find in this early Roman Church? What a meaning and emphasis this disclosure gives to Paul's quotation of righteous indignation and disappointment: "Go unto this people, and say, Hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and not perceive. . . . Be it known therefore unto you, that the salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and that they will hear it."

A last surprise which I shall mention is the prominent place women held in that Roman Church. We are apt to think that it is only now that the "Fair Sex" is coming into its own. Paul showed the way at the very beginning. He honoured woman by trusting her. No man has been so maligned and misunderstood on this score. When he has to send his precious manuscript to Rome, to whom does he commit it? A woman, Phœbe. He commends her as "our sister," elevating woman to the dignity of equal brotherhood

in Christ. It is Paul who says: "There is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

One-third of the names recorded on that historic roll are those of women. Imagination might well fill in some scenes of those days. When news reaches Rome that Paul's ship had arrived at Puteoli, we can imagine what a gathering there would be of the Christians to consider how best to welcome him. If I have read the character of Priscilla aright, I feel sure that, as I have already said, she must have been one of the first on her feet, her warm heart overflowing with enthusiasm, rousing the younger men to volunteer to go all the way to Appii Forum, and the older ones to the Three Taverns. All aglow with joyous excitement, she would speak up in that meeting, and suggest means for making the hard lot of the prisoner a little more tolerable. Trust her for that. When Paul came a second time to Rome as a prisoner in A.D. 67, we hear of no escort going forth to welcome him. But then, Priscilla was not in Rome!

CHAPTER FOUR

WHERE AND HOW ST. PAUL LIVED

PAUL began the day with porridge; unless, which is unlikely, he followed the example of Vitellius and the rich, who on rising from their beds dipped some morsels of bread in wine, and so refreshed themselves. That was called the *ientaculum*, and might correspond to our modern coffee. The first real meal was, however, the *prandium*. For the working classes this was mainly a dish of porridge; it was made out of farina, the flour of Far, a coarse species of wheat, and was called *puls*. Plautus, speaking of some joiner's work, says that it was made by a "clumsy porridge-eating Roman workman." The second meal was *coena*, and was taken early in the afternoon. Paul was per force a vegetarian. Almost the only meat procurable was that which had been offered in sacrifice, and with his sensitive consideration for the weaker brother he would deny himself rather than give offence. Therefore, except on rare occasions, when perhaps Priscilla with her own hands prepared a tasty dish of smoked flitch of bacon and tempted him to forget his Jewish prejudices, Paul would confine himself to peas, beans, lentils, cabbages, leeks and onions, and sometimes fish.

He would begin his day early, for even yet in Rome callers arrive at what we deem unearthly hours. To

hear the bell go when you are in your bath with a clear conscience that the hour is not late, is one of the little irritations of Roman life. Possibly the change of guard would rouse Paul from his slumbers. Then would follow his morning devotions, and the prisoner was ready for his work.

You may be sure no moment was lost. When his mind was fresh, before his visitors began to arrive, he would seize the opportunity of writing. Paul was a ready writer, though he was modern enough not to disdain the help of an amanuensis, as in the case of Tertius, when such assistance was available. He would always have his paper ready to hand. There were two kinds in use: charta, made from the papyrus, and parchment, so called after one of the early kings of Pergamus. The former was the cheaper, as the reeds out of which it was manufactured grew in great abundance in the stagnant pools left by the inundations of the Nile. But Paul had practical wisdom. His messages he knew would be of permanent value, so in his special reference to "parchment" one would infer that he did not grudge the expense of purchasing the best article. A little sidelight this, which shows how businesslike the Apostle was. There was nothing slovenly about him, like that of the divine who used to write his sermon notes on his shirt-cuffs! His pen would be made out of a reed, and his ink was composed of lamp-black, obtained by burning pitch or resin mixed with gum-water. Sometimes it was manufactured out of the dark fluid contained in the bag of the cuttle-fish. Paul would follow the modern rule

to "write on one side only" of his paper. Hence his manuscripts would incline to be somewhat bulky. We have four of his Epistles written from his house in Rome. These were to the Ephesians, the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon. Many others there doubtless were which have been lost. From these we can judge how well filled the days in Rome were with hard thinking as well as laborious writing.

Now as to the location of this house, naturally we are curious. We like to give things a habitation and a name. We have only Luke's one sentence to go upon: "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the Kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence, no man forbidding him."

This was clearly written after the expiry of that period, and in itself is an indirect evidence that this imprisonment had ended in a satisfactory manner. Paul was now at liberty once more.

In considering the site of his house we must make a distinction between "lodging" and "hired dwelling." The former doubtless refers to the first quarters he occupied, possibly as a guest, until he could find a house of his own, and it is not unlikely to suppose that the hospitable Aquila and Priscilla put their abode at his disposal. But Paul was such a gentleman at heart that he would not inconvenience them longer than was necessary. The presence of a soldier, he knew, would be trying to his hostess. Besides, he had so many visitors. On the first day the place was

THE THEATRE OF POMPEY

The spot where Cæsar was assassinated, close to the present Piazza Argentina

(Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi)

crowded from morning until night. Therefore you may be sure he would be very anxious to find a place of his own.

If ancient Rome were anything like the modern city, that would not be a very easy thing. In all likelihood house-hunting would be even a more laborious task then than now. Two things Paul had to keep in view: the convenience of the soldiers, and his visitors.

The first raises the question of who were his guards. It is too readily assumed that they belonged to the Pretorian Guard. The reasons for that are obvious: one being the mention in Paul's letter of the word "prætorium," and secondly the fact that this corps was the best known of the Roman army. Its barracks exist until this day in the same place. Had Paul's guardians been drawn from it, he would naturally have chosen some spot near the Porta Collina. But has not the meaning of that verse in Philippians been misread: "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorium, and to all the rest"? What was the idea in Paul's mind when he used that word? He had already been too familiar with it. Luke, when referring to Paul's imprisonment at Cæsarea, says that "Felix commanded Paul to be kept in Herod's Prætorium." Therefore the word had left too painful an impression to be forgotten. It was used to denote the official residence of the prefect or procurator of a Roman province; that is the sense in which it occurs all the five times we find it in the Gospels. The Philippians being inhabitants of a province would interpret the word in that way, and

Paul chose it as the best with which to convey his meaning to them. He wished them to understand that his bonds had become manifest throughout the whole Imperial Court, therefore he used the word "prætorium."

Mommsen, followed by Ramsay, considers that Julius, the centurion who was in charge of Paul, delivered him, not to the Prefect of the City, but to the commander of the Foreign Corps, to which he himself belonged. He also asserts the "prætorium" means "the whole body of persons connected with the sitting in judgment, the supreme Imperial Court, doubtless in this case including the Prefect of the Pretorian Guard, representing the Emperor in his capacity as the fountain of justice, together with the assessors and high officers of the court." (Ramsay, *St. Paul*, page 337.)

The Philippians could scarcely take all that in, but would accept the word as picturing to them the Imperial Court; and this, I take it, was the impression Paul wished to convey. If, therefore, it was the Foreign Corps which supplied his guard, as they had their headquarters on the Cœlian Hill Paul might have sought a house near there. Tradition, however, has given us but two sites to choose from. Neither is very near the Cœlian Hill, and both are about equally distant from it. Paul's purse, moreover, would be a constraining factor in the case. He could not afford to pay a high rent, and therefore must select a poor and crowded locality, perhaps even a top flat in an *insula*. The evidence for either is very weak, but of the

two, that in Via degli Strengari has the most to be said for it. The fact that it was in the Jewish quarter is not a very strong reason in itself, as Paul turned from the Jews to the Gentiles; but we must not forget that his first associates were Jews, and these would be the ones who would likely help him to find a house, and naturally in their own quarter. Besides, judging from the brickwork of the lower part of the house, it might quite easily have belonged to that period. The discovery of a shrine dedicated to Augustus in A.D. 3 dates the street. The strongest evidence is that of tradition, and the curious fact is that Jews and Romans are agreed on this, though the latter locate the so-called "school" of the Apostle a hundred yards farther along, under the present church of San Paolo alla Regola.

The more popular site, as shown to-day, is that of the old house under the church of St. Maria, in Via Lata. The principal difficulty here is the verdict of archæologists. They have pegged out a claim in this spot on behalf of a public building, the Saepta Julia, which stretched from near the Pantheon to the present Piazza Venezia. This would leave no room for private houses, unless a caretaker let out some of his rooms. Until some fresh evidence turns up in these days of new excavations, we must content ourselves with our ignorance. Still, we may rest assured that during these two years Paul was not uncomfortable. The Christians in the East saw to that. The Philippians, especially, had shown fellowship with him in the matter of giving; for Paul himself testifies, "Even in

Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my need." Then we know that Epaphroditus had come especially all the way from that city to bring its gifts, so that Paul was able gratefully to describe his circumstances as "having all things and abounding, as being filled."

I was asked by an American visitor to Rome, who evidently was finding its hotels expensive, how it was that Paul could afford to travel so much. My reply was that his trip to Rome was at the Government's expense. But, of course, that is only half an answer. Ramsay suggests that Paul had already fallen heir to his paternal inheritance. Possibly this had helped to fill his purse at one period, but his generous hand would as quickly empty it again. His chain would prevent him from working at his trade, so that he could no longer earn money for himself. I am inclined to think that his main support came from the generosity of the Church, and that the congregations in Rome did their share. As we shall see later, there were members who could afford to give largely. The wife of Plautius, Pomponia Græcina, was a Christian before Paul's arrival in Rome. Pudens, not yet probably of senatorial rank, had come under the influence of Paul's teaching. He knew Timothy well, and must often have visited the "hired house," and looking round with the practical eyes of an officer, would see what was needed to add to the Apostle's comfort. Besides, there were officials high up in the Imperial Household who had become Christians, and it would be a joy to them to minister to the wants of the prisoner.

Thus all that love could do, we may take it, was done to ease the lot of the Apostle. His house must have contained more than one room, for some of the messengers who came and went would find shelter under his roof. Then there were his more constant companions, Luke, Mark, Aristarchus, and Timothy. One feels that Paul would desire to have them beside him, and that his wish would be gratified. Possibly during the daytime he sat in the atrium or open court, which might have been common to all on the "stair," and received his visitors, and at night retired to one of the adjoining chambers.

Something of the atmosphere of the house can be gathered from the letters which were written in it. In them there is no allusion which comes up more frequently than that to his bonds. In each of them we see how the chain was never far distant from his thoughts. Poor Paul, how that great winged spirit of his must have yearned for liberty. He was not his own master. There were times in July and August when the house would become too stifling, and he would feel that he must have a breath of fresh air; but all would depend on the mood of his guard. If he had some lazy, brutish soldier who only wanted to sit and doze, then a walk was out of the question. But while there may have been some of that type, one feels certain that the majority had yielded to the charm of their prisoner and found it a pleasure to fulfil his request. Yet even the streets had their discomforts. The Roman pedestrian has never been very distinguished for his manners, and even to-day has a habit

of blocking the pavement. It was not likely much courtesy would be shown to a man chained to a soldier: he would be made to feel that he should make way for his betters—save the expression!—and many a time would be shoved into the gutter. Still, in that city of parks there must have been many a shaded nook which Paul discovered, and to which he often turned his steps.

What interesting conversations must have taken place between the soldiers of Nero and that veteran of the Cross. Though the words are lost, their echo is heard in far-off lands. Christianity breaks forth unexpectedly in remote parts of Britain and on the lonely frontiers of Africa. Whence did it come? Missionaries had been sent there at the State's expense. Outwardly they were private soldiers who had been chained to Paul; inwardly they were souls baptised with his spirit, born again by his Gospel, recruited by him into the great army of Jesus Christ.

But this "hired house" was more than a private dwelling; it was the one place in all the Roman Empire to which the Churches, both of Greece and Asia, looked for counsel in the midst of growing difficulties and rising conflicts. There is no reference in his Epistles to the churches of Palestine, formed almost exclusively of Jewish elements. These were under the jurisdiction of Peter. With his special sphere Paul was most careful not to interfere. Doubtless Peter acted on the same principle with regard to Paul's field of labour in the great Gentile world, and more especially in the very seat thereof! We have no

trace of him, therefore, in Rome from the Pentecost down to the close of those two years of Paul's imprisonment there, either in the messages to Rome or from Rome. The silence of Scripture is eloquent!

What a variety of interests centred in that humble dwelling. How true it was that Paul had "the care of all the churches." It was a burden heavier than his chains. What anxiety would be his when some fresh messenger brought to him the tidings of some new form of error creeping into a beloved congregation! What joy would thrill him when another would tell of the triumph of truth, or of the steadfastness of his spiritual children in times of difficulty! Then what hearty salutations would go forth to the ends of the known world. There was no brighter, busier room in all Rome in those days. It was "The Church Offices" of the first great Christian organisation, and the General Secretary was chained to his seat!

But into that room flitted shadows as well as sunshine. There was always the drawn-out anxiety with regard to his trial. Suspense saps strength more than anything else, and the knowledge that at any moment his work might be interrupted by sudden execution would, to say the least, be rather disconcerting. What a testimony to the power of Christianity that under such conditions, dragged out through two long years, Paul never grew despondent or threw up his work because of its difficulties. In addition, there would be something to pain his sensitive soul every day. His house, wherever situated, was certain to be in a crowded part. It is human nature to see the worst

side of our neighbours, and as the best in these ancient slum-dwellers averaged a pretty low morality, there would be depths disclosed to the Apostle's eyes that were unspeakable. Could the experience of David be repeated?—

> He took me from a fearful pit,
> And from the miry clay,
> And on a rock He set my feet,
> Establishing my way.

From the cesspools of Rome, could Christ lift humanity? Paul believed He could, and therein lay the secret of his courage.

But there were other troubles, personal ones, which darkened these rooms. His beloved Epaphroditus fell ill there. The Angel of Death shadowed the home. All thought the end was coming, and people spoke in whispers. Paul prayed; he wrestled in spirit and prevailed. He drew his friend back: but such effort exhausts. Wakeful nights, anxious watching, would wear down the Apostle's strength. He who had been able to work miracles but a short time before in Malta; who could write to the Corinthians: "Truly the signs of an Apostle were wrought among you in all patience by signs and wonders and mighty works"; who had raised a young man from death, seems to have lost that miraculous gift in Rome. There is no attempt made to heal Epaphroditus in the same manner as the father of Publius. At this point, do we cross the water-shed from the Church's infancy, when miracle was natural to its childhood, when the

SÆPTA JULIA

A beautiful marble building designed by Julius Cæsar. It was surrounded by a portico one mile square. Here the people recorded their votes. On its site now stands the Church of S. Maria in Via Lata, under which is shown the " house of Paul "

(*Photograph by kind permission of Prof. G. Gatteschi*)

appeal is not to the sense of wonder, but to mind and conscience? Possibly the time had come, and the place, when the preaching of the Kingdom of God and the "teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ" were to be shown to be henceforth the great means of winning men to the truth. Is it not like the divine method of working that, while amongst the Eastern races miracle had its place in establishing Christianity, at Rome, where law and philosophy were dominant forces, the appeal was made to reason, thus confirming the words of a writer of the fourth century, that the Church in Rome was not founded on miracles any more than on the Apostles?

What a busy scene that "hired house" must have presented. The Romans are proverbially curious even yet. I have been amused at what, to a stranger, might seem an impertinence, but is, after all, but innocent curiosity. The man in the street would soon hear of this persuasive teacher, and as there was no hindrance to entering the house, many would drop in just to see and hear for themselves. Paul would thus never lack a congregation, and perhaps his very chains added weight to his words. Had he sought diligently he could not have found a more central pulpit, for in the thoroughfares of Rome East and West jostled each other. The slave, in his morning errands, had time to stop and look in, knowing that he would not be kicked out like a dog, appreciating in his heart that kindly welcome, which somehow sent him forth with the feeling that he was a man. The freedman, in the rush of his business, went to get a

glimpse of the preacher his neighbours were talking about. There would always be a crowd near that door, and every now and then it would make way deferentially for an officer from "Cæsar's household," who, with a newborn courtesy so unlike that of his compeers, would pass through its midst to have a few words with Paul. The guard would come smartly to attention as Julius the centurion would bring his friends to see his former prisoner. There would always be the glitter of armour in that room. No wonder Paul could not avoid using it in his word-pictures. His very guards in their off-time would like to come back to chat with him, and they would bring their comrades with them. Was there ever such a room in Rome, I wonder. It was a new thing for that proud city to see officers and privates, senators and slaves, patricians and plebeians, all elbowing each other in that narrow space. And Paul? He was just the same, whether his audience was fashionable or the reverse. He was as eager to win the soul of the outcast as that of the courtier.

His conversation had but one theme. He summed it up in that message to the Corinthians: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified." Whether by the river bank outside the gates of Philippi, where he joins the group of praying women, or seated in the atrium of his "hired house" chained to a soldier, it is of Christ that he loves to speak. Yet the opportunities are too uncertain, the time too short, to dwell overlong on the wonder of His birth or the wisdom of His words;

his audience might go away, never to return. In fact, as he talks, someone on the outskirts slips back into the street and is lost for ever. So it is the Christ, not of Bethlehem, not of Nazareth, not of Galilee, but of Calvary, Who monopolises his speech. The secret of this lay in the fact of Paul's own religious experience. He lived on Calvary's hill. The four walls might shut him in from the great city which throbbed around him; but that secluded chamber was sanctified by the shadow of the Cross. If sometimes his impetuous spirit rebelled at his fate, he looked up into that meek, submissive face crowned with its mock regalia of thorns. If the derision of the crowds cut his sensitive feelings, he looked round on that visionary mob as they thronged Golgotha, wagging their heads, and that sight nerved him to courage and endurance.

Often some young blade from the schools, proud of his Greek philosophy, would come to cross swords with this new teacher. I can imagine a glint of humour in the Apostle's eye. His training under Gamaliel would serve him to good purpose now, as he took the young man on his own ground. We can picture their discussion beginning perhaps with the merits of Æschylus: but Paul would soon guide it towards the Cross. Whatever the starting-point, that was always the goal. He would admit that the Olympian religion was an advance on what had preceded it, in that it substituted an appeal to a person instead of one to a law. It brought to man the Good News that, as Plutarch expresses it, "the world is not ruled by fabulous Typhons and Giants," but by One Who is a

wise Governor. Paul would point out that the Æschylean doctrine was but a step to his own. The suppression of the Law by a personal relationship to a Divine Person and a consequent disregard for the crude coarse test of a man's "works" or "deeds," and its emphasis on faith as the unfailing test of the spirit, brought Æschylus and his student near to Paul. He, too, had a scorn for what he called "the beggarly elements," and would agree with Æschylus that there is forgiveness for him who repents and trusts and prays. But Paul understood the human heart better than ever the Greek tragedian. There is something that does not ring quite true in his great tragedy. When Orestes is pardoned by the will of Zeus, the Furies yield; the Law is deemed to be satisfied; but somehow the audience in their hearts would feel that there was something lacking. Æschylus did not interpret the deepest feelings in human nature. Far down lies a sense of justice which demands that pardon cannot be had cheaply, the Furies cannot be turned aside at a word, even though it be that of Zeus himself. Paul would show his student visitor, with whom he had agreed up to this point, that here Æschylus fell short. Man may be forgiven, but sin still claims its victim, blood will still have blood, and the only way is for the Divine King Himself to die for His people. Thus the pollution is cleansed, and the sin is paid for by blood, even though it be the blood of the Innocent. At the end of their talk the Cross stands out as the natural goal to which the teaching of Æschylus should lead, and we can picture the young

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man turning thoughtfully away from that "hired house" with a new light on his Greek philosophy, and a new star shining in his firmament far beyond the horizon to which the Greek poet could only point him.

Many must have been the conversations like that, and Paul, who could be all things to all men, who could speak to the soldier in the language of the barrack-room, who could bring home in simple words to the heart of the slave "the unsearchable riches of Christ," could also unfold in the phrases of the school "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

To understand the freedom which the prisoner enjoyed, we must remember one most important fact: he was a Roman citizen. The Empire flung its shield over him. So recently as the time of Claudius, the assumption of Roman citizenship without the right to it had been made a capital offence, so guarded had this privilege become. No one, therefore, dare lay claim to it unless that claim could be substantiated. Least of all would Paul assert a right which was not his. How it came to his family we cannot say. Tarsus, at most, was but a free city by the grant of Augustus; it was neither a "colony" nor a "municipium," and therefore birth in it did not convey this distinction. "I was free born," Paul said to the captain of the guard in Jerusalem. His father must have won that "knighthood" by some distinguished service to the State. He was a man of eminence, and Paul inherited brains as well as privileges. He certainly

had much to thank his father for. There is much in a name, and "Paulus" was in itself a corroboration of his claim to Roman citizenship. In the narrative of St. Luke, the change from Saul to Paul comes in when he proceeds to record the conversion to the faith of Sergius Paulus, the proconsul. That has led to the supposition on the part of some that the Apostle thereupon got his Roman name from him, as was frequently the custom with the clients of great Romans. The relationship between the proconsul and the Apostle was not of such a character as to lead to that. Besides, the words "Saul, who is also called Paul," seem to suggest that it was the proconsul's name which had brought to the mind of St. Luke the fact that it was also Saul's other name. We can dismiss the idea that it had anything to do with his stature—as if it had been given to him because he was little. It was quite a usual thing for people to possess two names, though do not let the hyphenated class of to-day imagine that they can claim the Apostle as belonging to their ranks! Paul is the nearest rendering of Saul, and it was natural that when he entered on his special work amongst the Gentiles he should be spoken of by his Roman name. Cicero's words reflect the importance of possessing Roman citizenship: "To bind a Roman citizen is a misdeed, to scourge him is a crime, to put him to death is almost a parricide." No wonder the magistrates at Philippi trembled the next morning for their hasty injustice. Paul used his right sparingly, and just as our missionaries in China during the Boxer troubles preferred rather to suffer

loss than insist on their rights, lest worldly motives might be attributed to spiritual work, so the Apostle chose rather to face torture than save himself by pleading a special privilege. He used it, however, when it could further the aims of his work. "Thou hast appealed unto Cæsar: unto Cæsar shalt thou go," said Festus, acknowledging the Roman claim of his prisoner; and so it opened the way for his coming to the Imperial City.

Before we shut the door of the "hired house," let us take a good look at its tenant. There are several things which can help us to picture that face and figure. In the Domitilla Catacomb there was found the celebrated bronze medallion now preserved in the Vatican Library. De Rossi says that it belonged to the second century, or, at least, it was not later than the third. On it there have come down to us typical portraits of both Apostles, Peter and Paul. One of the best evidences of their truth is that all other portraits of the earliest times, whether on frescoed wall, or in sculpture, or in mosaic, or engraving, agree with those of this bronze medallion: the features do not vary. Just as in every line of his countenance Peter appears the fisherman of Galilee, with strong, well-marked lines, in the vigour of health, with short hair and round curly beard, so Paul is the man of deep thought, thin, even wiry in form, slightly bald, and with beard somewhat long and pointed. According to Professor Lanciani, the expression of the face is calm and benevolent, with a gentle touch of sadness. An air of refinement pervades his countenance. Conybeare and

Howson thus describe him: "Of short stature, a long face with high forehead, an aquiline nose, close and prominent eyebrows."

But we are not dependent merely on sculpture. Paul has drawn his own likeness for us. In that confidential letter to Philemon he thus refers to himself: "Though I have all boldness in Christ to enjoin thee that which is befitting, yet for love's sake I rather beseech thee, being such an one as Paul the aged." The probability is that at this time he was a little over sixty. "Senex" is the rendering in the Latin version. The face is therefore furrowed, perhaps the hand is shaky, but the spirit has eternal youth.

CHAPTER FIVE

SOME CHRISTIAN HOMES IN ROME

ONE of the firstfruits of Christianity is hospitality. Quickly it established home circles in Rome, the fragrance of whose friendships still clings to recently unearthed chambers. If only those walls could speak, what gracious echoes would they not repeat! Paul had his happiest hours in some of them. He loved good company. His big heart overflowed when it communed with a choice spirit; and what man has had a more inspiring circle of congenial friends? The spade of the excavator is gradually bringing to light some of those homes whose sympathy and love were such a solace to the great Apostle in the days of his imprisonment. As already stated, we believe that he had liberty to move about, though chained to a soldier. He had influential friends in the palace and the barracks who would use their influence to make the conditions of his captivity as easy as possible. Julius the centurion would not forget the man to whom he owed his own life and that of his fellow-passengers. Things could be "wangled" even under the strict discipline of Rome, and I am certain that freedom for Paul to go about the city was one of these.

Now, to what houses would he direct his steps? This opens up an engrossing subject, and on its

threshold we stumble on a name recently unearthed which offers a key to that earliest Christian society in Rome. Excavations in the cemetery of St. Priscilla have brought to light confirmation, not only of an heroic death, but of a Christian life, whose witness-bearing was not in vain. A little circle of graves of freedmen and slaves surrounds the tomb of their master, Acilius Glabrio. These, too, bear the marks of Christian faith. They tell the story of the influence of a strong, fearless martyr. It may be difficult for a man to be a hero to his own valet, but Glabrio was, or else there would not have been so many of his household who followed in his steps.

Suetonius and Dion Cassius have already told us a good deal about this distinguished man, who was consul in A.D. 91 under the Emperor Domitian. What they have not told us clearly, the palm branch has revealed: he was a martyr of the Cross. They said that he was arraigned by the Emperor as "a deviser of new things." The accusation was connected with the practice of some foreign superstition unknown to the State religion. He was condemned by Domitian to fight a lion and two bears in the amphitheatre at Albanum in A.D. 95. Like David, he overcame the wild animals by his strength of arm. What a physically powerful man he must have been, strong in muscle as well as spirit! But this did not save his life. He was ordered into banishment, and eventually put to death. Such a personality in Rome was a light which could not be hid under a bushel, but shone forth from an exalted

candlestick. He was a member of that aristocratic group in Rome who, under the preaching of Paul, or those whom he had converted, became Christians, and had the courage not merely to die for their faith but to practise it. The Gospel opened their hearts and hands. They recognised the brotherhood of slaves. They not only helped them in their hard lot while living, but when dead, offered them the hospitality of their tomb. Thus, like the Master, it could be said of the humblest of these outcasts, "and he made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death." The Priscilla Cemetery is an outstanding witness to this new spirit of comradeship between rich and poor which Christ had introduced into the world.

I have spoken of Acilius Glabrio, but there is another name even more closely associated with this cemetery by tradition. It is that of the army officer and wealthy senator, Pudens. His mother's name was Priscilla, and she has bequeathed it to this spot. The influence of this well-known family in the Church of St. Paul's time was very great. Their position, their courage, their culture, must have been a strength to the young community. In those days, to have a distinguished senator as a friend meant much. When we compare Glabrio with Pudens we note a strong resemblance. Both were soldiers, both were statesmen, both were Christians, both apparently belonged to the same family. De Rossi goes the length of suggesting that they were one and the same person.

Without accepting that conclusion, let us see what

we know about Pudens, and note how he became a great social centre in Rome. Martial helps us with this. If we identify him with the Aulus Rufus Pudens Pudentinus who, under the reign of Claudius, held a military command in the southern part of Britain, the problem becomes fascinating, and romance enters into it. Almost weekly I pass the tomb of his great friend, Aulus Plautius, on the road to Tivoli. How little do British tourists, as they hurriedly motor past on their way to see the gardens of the Villa d'Este, realise that the solid round tower beside the Ponte Lucano holds much more of interest for them! Here rests the dust of that great governor of Southern Britain who, under Claudius, was instrumental in bringing the Britons into subjection to Rome. He was a statesman rather than a soldier, and perhaps the greatest statecraft he accomplished was when he married Gladys, the sister of Caractacus, the British king. He was wise enough to know that there are other ways of winning kingdoms than by the sword!

But the romance of this bit of British history does not end there. Another charming love-story enters into it. Pudens went to England as a dashing young officer, second in command of his company. He had not yet been promoted to be chief centurion, which would be equivalent to our major; but he had expectations. To these his friend Martial, the poet, alludes in his letter from Rome:

"Whilst thou, Aulus, delight in a near view of the Arcadian bear, and endure the climate of the Northern skies, oh, how very nearly had I, your

friend, been carried off to the waters of the Styx, and seen the dusky clouds of the Elysian plain! My eyes, weak as they were, continually looked round for your countenance, and the name of Pudens was perpetually on my cold tongue. If the wool-spinning sisters do not weave the threads of my life back, and my voice does not address inattentive deities, you will return safe to the cities of Latium to see your friend safe, and as a deserving knight be rewarded with the rank of first centurion."

The luck of Pudens was much greater than that. He got his chance in the campaign against Caractacus, and shared in the glory of the Roman victory; but though victor, he was taken captive in another way. It was his duty to accompany the captured king and his beautiful daughter to Rome. In those days that was a long journey, but not a bit too long for the ardent lover. He entered the city a captor and a captive in one. The king was his prisoner, but he was a prisoner of the king's daughter, albeit the chains were silken. The young officer had caught the British sovereign, but that sovereign's daughter had caught the young officer. Who won the trick?

No wonder Chichester has pleasant memories of that young man, and that he bestowed on it a temple to Neptune and Minerva. It is not the first time lovers have proved generous! Besides, it shows us that this officer had pious inclinations, and that according to his lights he was loyal to his faith. He was ripe fruit for the hand of Paul to pluck. In Rome a royal welcome awaited. Claudius was in a happy mood,

and received with worthy hospitality the conquered king. He gave him a palace to live in, and in return Caractacus changed the name of his daughter to Claudia, as a compliment to the Emperor. Every day I am reminded of this episode, for my study windows look out on the Barberini Gardens. There, framed in the wall, is the tablet from the great arch of Claudius which he erected across the Via Flaminia in honour of his victory. Only fragments of it remain, and the one my eyes daily rest on bears this proud inscription: "Erected for having subjugated eleven kings of Britain, without loss on the Roman side, and for having, first of all Romans, annexed to the Empire barbarous trans-oceanic lands." The arch deserved a better fate than awaited it. Pope Clement VIII had the marbles sawn into slabs, and made use of in the pavement and in the veneering of the transept of St. John Lateran. So perished one hundred and thirty-six cartloads of this fine Greek and Luna marble. The fate of one of the panels which escaped this depredation is even more humiliating. It was placed on the stairway of the Conservatori Palace. Honour, you say—if decapitation is an honour! A thought-wave of very shallow dimensions moved the authorities to an insane act. They placed the panel beside three from the Arch of Marcus Aurelius. A fourth would add symmetry to the group. To complete the uniformity, they took off the head of Claudius and replaced it by that of the Philosopher Emperor. One need not doubt that the latter had a better head; but it is rather an irony of fate that he

who reverenced the truth should perpetuate a falsehood, and masquerade in a scene which took place a hundred years before his day. That is a case of making history to order with a vengeance!

However, we must go back to Claudius when he was unconscious of all that awaited his memory. He did some things perhaps more worthy of recording, and one of these was his benediction on the marriage of his promising young officer, Pudens, with the British princess. Martial in A.D. 53 thus announces the fact:

"Claudia Peregrina Rufus is about to be married to my friend Pudens. Be propitious, Hymen, with thy torches. As fitly is precious cinnamon united with nard, and Massic wine with Attic honey. Nor are elms more fitly wedded to tender vines, the lotus more love the waters, or the myrtle the river's bank. Mayest thou always hover over their couch, fair Concord; and may Venus ever be auspicious to a couple so well matched. In after-years may the wife cherish her husband in his old age; and may she, when grown old, not seem so to her husband."

A marriage wish could not be better expressed, and in this case it came true. It was a union of two souls tuned to each other. They became united in the most glorious of all enterprises—that of establishing the Church of Christ in Rome, and ministering to its greatest Apostle.

How their conversion came about we do not know. Reverent imagination may fill in the gap, and as soon as it is given rein it leads me to Priscilla. She

is my heroine of those days, and I feel that if all were known, we would be astonished at what a woman could do. She was a Roman, though of more modest family than that of Pudens, and had married a Jew, Aquila. There seems to have been a connection, however, more than merely the Christian bond, between the Priscilla of the Aventine and the aristocratic lady of the same name who was the mother of Pudens. It is just possible that the former took her name from her patroness. It was not an unusual custom in ancient Rome. If so, and my supposition is right, then she repaid that honour a hundredfold.

On returning from Corinth to Rome, I can imagine Priscilla seeking out all her friends and relations, and telling them the Good News which Paul had brought to her and her husband. Among others, she would come to the house of Pudens, and probably being a favourite with his mother, having been called after her, she would be encouraged to open her heart. It is a pity that we know nothing personally of the older Priscilla. Hermes calls the mother of Paul Priscilla, but there we dare not follow this intoxicating thought. Yet the fact that after twenty centuries her name is honoured by being attached to one of the most sacred spots in God's Great Acre reflects a glory on her life, though it has long since set below the horizon of human memory. The fact also that she had such a son, Pudens, and such illustrious grandchildren, is a proof that she herself must have been a woman of strong character, one of those noble Roman matrons who were the secret of Rome's strength.

Fitting soil was this for the Apostle's seed, and if Priscilla the younger was the sower, we are not surprised at the result. With all the freshness of wonder the story of the Babe in Bethlehem comes to that mother's heart. She had seen enough of the worship of the gods to make her sick, and like a breath from the great ocean of God's love there blows into her soul this new life. It transforms the home. She calls her son the Roman officer who is in favour with the Emperor, and of whom she is so proud. Perhaps by this time their poet friend, Martial, had written his next complimentary ode:

"Although Claudia Rufina may be a blue-eyed Briton born, how much has she of the disposition of the Latin race! What a graceful figure! The Italian matrons might believe her a Roman, those of Attica of their country. The gods bless her in that she proves fruitful to her pious husband. Therefore she may hope, as a young woman, to beget daughters-in-law. May it so please the powers that she rejoices in one husband for ever, and that she exult in three sons."

Perhaps in that word "pious" (*sancto marito*) we get a hint of the change which had come over Pudens. Even Martial notes that new Christian grace which had added a fresh charm to his friend. Imagination would like to linger long over this family. Did Claudia learn of the new faith from her husband? And already one with him in spirit, did she become one in faith? We love to picture this young husband and his wife in their beautiful home on the Viminal, which is

just now being unearthed, talking together over the wonderful news that God had actually come down from heaven and lived as a man on earth, had been crucified, and had risen again the third day and ascended into glory. "I must tell my father," would be the exclamation of the dutiful daughter, and she would hurry off to the old British king. Despite the kindness of Claudius, we can imagine that the exile's heart was often yearning for the white cliffs of Dover. In losing an earthly crown, however, he was to gain a heavenly one. Claudia would burst in on him, "Oh, I have something so very wonderful to tell you, and it is all true. Pudens believes it, and his mother, Priscilla. That should be certificate enough, for they are not the kind to be taken in. It makes me sing for very joy, and it will bring a new hope into your heart." "Sit down, my daughter, and let me hear your tale," the old man would say sadly; and then he would listen to the old, old story, new then, with all the fascination of freshness; and the British king's heart would be touched, as the fair pleader in her enthusiasm and her conviction preached Christ, and he, too, would bow his head and at last say "Amen." Perhaps that was why he was the more eager to get back to his own country. He had now something to bring it. He had to tell the Good News to his kinsfolk. At last, in A.D. 58, Nero let him return. If his departure as a captured king had been sad, his people must have been astonished at the hope which shone in his eyes as they hastened to welcome him. Captivity had not crushed his

spirit; instead, he returned a new man. The Gospel of Christ had transformed him, and through him it began to transform his country. There is more than fancy in the thought that the first earthly king to lay his crown at the foot of the Cross was British, and that from him descended the great Constantine who was to liberate the Church and give freedom to the Christian. It is possible that with him went Aristobulus, who is said by the Greek Church to be the father-in-law of Peter. This is borne out by the fact that Paul, writing that same year to Rome from Corinth, sends salutations not to Aristobulus, but to his household, as if he knew that Aristobulus had already left the city.

Pastor, the son of Hermes, tells us more about the family of Pudens and Claudia. They had two daughters and two sons: Pudentiana, Praxedes, Novatus, and Timotheus. Pudens himself lived until A.D. 96, and his wife died a year later. Some suppose that St. John's Second Epistle was a letter of consolation to Claudia. If so, never was sorrow so fruitful. We learn from Pastor that "the daughters of Pudens desired to have a baptistery in their house." "Pudens went to his Saviour, leaving his daughters strengthened with chastity and learned in all the divine law. These sold their goods, and distributed the produce to the poor, and persevered strictly in the love of Christ. They desired to have a baptistery in their house, to which the blessed Pius (who was Bishop of Rome A.D. 142–57) not only consented, but with his own hand drew the plan

of the fountain. On his suggestion the enfranchisement of the Christian slaves was declared, with all the ancient usages, in the oratory founded by Pudens. There at the festival of Easter, ninety-six were baptised, so that henceforth assemblies were constantly held in the said oratory, which night and day resounded with hymns of praise. Many pagans gladly came thither to find the faith and receive baptism. Then Pudentia went to God. Her sister (Prassedis) and I (Pastor) wrapped her in perfumes, and kept her concealed in the oratory. Then after twenty-eight days we carried her to the cemetery of Priscilla, and laid her near her father Pudens."

Eleven months later Novatus died, and bequeathed his money to Praxedes. In his lifetime, following the custom of rich Romans, he had built extensive baths. These were no longer of any use to his maiden sister, so she handed them over to her minister Pius, that he might transform their central hall into a church. This was done, and in addition a baptistery was constructed out of one of the adjoining rooms. At the present moment, below the church the baths are being disclosed, and one can see the perfect system of heating adopted by the architects of that time. The church itself is considered the oldest in Rome. It is mentioned in inscriptions of the fourth century. We know that it was restored by Siricius, who was bishop from A.D. 384 to A.D. 398, and he is supposed to have placed in the apse that magnificent mosaic, whose freshness and beauty still attract the admiration of visitors. It is thus the oldest piece

of mosaic work belonging to any church in Rome, for though the beautiful roof of Santa Constantia may have the advantage of a few years of age, it was built for a mausoleum. The picture represents Christ in the centre, enthroned, and holding a book in His hand. The Roman artist has left his mark on the figure, for it has all the majestical air of a Jupiter, and the disciples in their togas might well be taken for Roman senators. On each side stand the two sisters offering crowns. The background is interesting. It represents a great villa: can it be a reproduction of the house of Pudens itself? If so, then we have an extant picture of the noble residence where Paul must have been a welcome visitor. The chained prisoner, with his guard, would have no hesitation in approaching that courtly mansion with its pillared courts, for the key of Christ's love had turned the lock.

To return to *The Acts of Pastor and Timotheus*, about the date of which scholars are divided, but which, it must be acknowledged, contain the substance of received tradition, we find the story continued in the appendix.

"At the end of two years a great persecution was declared against the Christians, and many of them received the crown of martyrdom. Prassedis concealed a great number of them in her oratory; but the Emperor Antoninus heard of these gatherings, and many Christians were seized. The blessed Prassedis collected their bodies at night and buried them in the cemetery of Priscilla. Then, worn out

with sorrow, the virgin asked for death. Her tears and her prayers reached to heaven, and fifty-four days after her brethren had suffered, she passed to God. I, Pastor, her minister, have buried her body near that of her father Pudens."

We cannot leave this gracious home with its hospitable inmates without connecting it with that very last message of St. Paul in the closing verses of 2 Timothy: "Eubulus greeteth thee, and Pudens, Linus, and Claudia." I know unsentimental critics wave aside all romantic interpretations. But somehow, living in the atmosphere of that house of Pudens, the dry bones of mere textual statements live afresh. Pudens and Claudia become real personages. Imagination may trespass a little across the frontiers of reason, but it does not outrage conscience. Something tells us that it would just be like the Claudia we have depicted, to show her loyalty to the Apostle at the very last, even though in those dark days of his second imprisonment, when he was deserted by so many, such devotion might mean death. We love her for it, and despite heartless critics, I cannot but think that this Claudia is the same who lived in that beautiful house whose ruins we see to-day, and who was the friend of Martial, and a British princess.

We come perhaps to surer ground when we repicture another house which was a true home for the Apostle. This stood on the slopes of the Aventine, and its site is accepted to-day by archæologists. For what I am going to say about it, I am indebted to notes left by my predecessor in my church, Dr.

Gordon Gray. He ministered in Rome for forty years, and was a keen archæologist. It was owing to his insistence that this site was investigated, and that the proofs were discovered which put beyond the bounds of doubt the fact that here we have the remains of the house of Aquila and Priscilla.

When Paul writes his great letter to Rome in A.D. 58, there is one home which stands out before him as having a church in it, and that is the house of Aquila and Priscilla. Paul's connection with this remarkable pair lasted for sixteen years, from A.D. 52 until the hour of his death. Their friendship never failed, and in his last moments his thoughts turn to them. It was the bond of a common craft which first brought them together. A trade has its social responsibilities. "Because Paul was of the same craft he abode with them." Thus they met in Corinth. Paul never claims that they were his converts. They may have been Christians before; but the inference seems to be that it was their occupation and not their common faith which brought them together. There is a providence even in one's business, and when the young student of Tarsus chose a trade—as all Jews had to do, whatever their profession—he little thought how useful his choice was to be. Not only did it win him some of his best friendships in life, but the very trade itself offered opportunities which others would not have done. For instance, there is something social about tent-making. Several people have to sit round the same canvas. It requires, also, a room of considerable size, and when work was

over this could be turned to advantage as a meeting-place. The Roman house was well suited for this kind of occupation. At the entrance was the atrium. It usually was colonnaded, and though the centre was open to the sun, there was shade for workmen under its roofed aisles. With willing hearts and such a convenient rendezvous, you may be sure that it would not be long before the Christians in Rome made full use of their privilege; and especially on the first day of the week they would gather there. We know many of these by name, thanks to the tender memory of the Apostle. What new thing was this in Rome, the slave and the senator sitting on the same benches? We talk of revolution. Nothing can equal the revolution of the Cross. Only that it turns the world upside down so quietly that the thing is done before men realise it. We like to think of our good friends from whom we have just parted coming there on the Sabbath morning, Pudens and Claudia, and perhaps along with them Linus, who in my heart of hearts I believe to have been the brother of Claudia; but do not tell the critics that! I wonder if Pilate, when he was in Rome, ever attended a Christian meeting? One novelist has so depicted him, and the same instinct that brings a murderer back to the grave of his victim might arouse a morbid curiosity in that ex-governor to see what this sect was saying whose Leader he had crucified! By this time they had become too important a body not to be spoken about. Paul's presence in the city was not a fact that could be overlooked. Besides, there was that gracious

lady Pomponia Græcina. She was the wife of Aulus Plautius, who was the real conqueror of South Britain, and whose monument, as I have already said, stands beside the road to Tivoli. We know that she was put on trial for her faith; but fortunately her husband was her judge and he acquitted her. Still, a thing like that was bound to be talked about in Roman society. No; Christianity could not be hid, and it certainly was not in those early days. Rome was being stirred. The six million graves in the catacombs are evidence enough of that. We shall speak of Peter later, but to think that he also might have been there adds fresh interest to this spot.

The fact that to-day the church which stands over this site is called St. Prisca, and not St. Priscilla, might perhaps put seekers off the scent. It is possible that the longer name got shortened. That is a habit which Romans still have. They bite off the ends of their words. It may be due to laziness. If this were what took place, then it is easy to understand how the new name got mixed up with a real St. Prisca. She was a Roman virgin of illustrious birth, who at the age of thirteen was exposed in the amphitheatre. A fierce lion was let loose on her; but her youth and innocence disarmed the fury of the savage beast, which instead of tearing her to pieces, humbly licked her feet. Being led back to prison, she was beheaded. The connection of this youthful saint with this spot dates from Eutichianus, who was Bishop of Rome from A.D. 275 to A.D. 283; and its foundation is not a very substantial one—a bishop's dream. Besides, De

Rossi has come to the conclusion that the bishop was wrong, because he thinks he has found the grave of the young martyr in the cemetery of St. Priscilla. She could not be buried in two places. So it is a case of the bishop's dream versus scientific exploration. I leave it to the reader's inclination rather than his judgment to decide. For some it is sufficient that a bishop says it—that settles the matter. For myself, I have not much faith in dreams, even bishops'. His supper may have had more to do with it than we imagine, so I am prepared to offer as a solution of the change of name, that the Romans in their laziness just bit the last part off, and called it St. Prisca for short. As far down as A.D. 499, the old name still held, though it was then appearing in its contracted form. As late as the thirteenth century, the tradition still lingered that this was the site of the house of Aquila and Priscilla, though by then the bishop's dream had won the field, and more or less established it as the church of St. Prisca the Martyr.

However, dreams are too unsubstantial to last in this practical age. Hard facts began to assert themselves. The first was one discovered by De Rossi in an old letter written by Carrara, treasurer of Pius VI in 1776. The writer alludes to the discovery of an ancient oratory beside the church of St. Prisca. It was adorned with Christian paintings of the fourth century, almost entirely obliterated by time, except the figures of the Apostles. Then follows the tantalising announcement that unfortunately the drawing which had been made of these portraits had been

lost. Just think how interesting it would have been to have had the authenticated pictures of the Apostles as painted in the fourth century! But there is always some careless person in this world who mislays things.

The second discovery was as important. In the year 1776 a bronze medal was dug up near this spot. It bore an inscription indicating that it had been sent from a city in Spain in A.D. 222 to Gaius Marius Pudens Cornelianus, a person of senatorial rank, whom the city had selected as its patron. I have no doubt this was an honoured heirloom in its day; but it is for other reasons we value it. Here is a Pudens living near the house of Aquila and Priscilla. We had always suspected that the two families were friends, and now we have a proof nearly two centuries later. This particular Cornelius Pudens or his father, out of reverence perhaps for the church which had been in this house, may have purchased it, and so retained it in a Christian family.

In March 1904, Dr. Gordon Gray and Commendatore Boni made excavations together, and came on the remains of an old Roman house beside the church of St. Prisca. The bricks belonged to the Imperial period, and might well have been placed there in the time of this Cornelius Pudens. Going a little deeper, they found the remains of an earlier house which was undoubtedly Republican, and possibly had been erected about the time of Julius Cæsar. Thus in Paul's time it would have the venerable aspect of a house a hundred years old. It might be interesting to give an extract from the official report

of the engineer who carried out the work of excavation:

"The construction of the walls of tufa goes back, according to Comm. Boni, to the period between Sylla and Cæsar, and the special workmanship shown in it forms one of the most beautiful and rare examples of the buildings of that period. The two stretches of wall which line the descending stair in the building seem to be constructed of pieces of 'tegoloni,' large tiles, as was the custom before the use of 'mattoni,' bricks properly so called, became general under the Empire. A well was found lined in part with slates of peperino, fixed without mortar in the virgin soil of sandy clay, forming as it were the pavement of the room. In the vault with walls of tufa, in part injured, there must have been, in perfect correspondence with the aforesaid well, a circular opening equal in diameter, as one can still see from the part of the surface lining which in the thickness of the vault limited the opening itself. There was found another well with plastered walls and with the characteristic 'pedarole' which are met with so frequently in wells of the Roman epoch. When the excavations of this latter well were suspended there was discovered the top of a gallery, which also had plastered walls, and from which there came forth a strong current of air. It is my belief that the said gallery is the same with that which begins from the other well similar to the one described, and which is found at the bottom of the excavations formerly made by Mr. Parker under the convent garden."

Without a doubt here is an old Roman house. Historical evidence and tradition point to this place as the home of Aquila and Priscilla. It is possible that further excavations may bring more facts to light. The walls discovered seem a little too substantial for a tradesman's dwelling, but there is just the possibility that the latter stood between two more imposing neighbours and lay more under the present church than these more massive remains would permit. Whether we gaze on the actual stones which offered hospitality to the Apostle or not, we may be sure that he and his soldier-guard were a familiar sight toiling up the steep slope of the Aventine on a hot day, the soldier expectant of the cooling drink of wine which awaited him from the gracious hands of Priscilla, and Paul oblivious of the heat and the fatigue in the joy of the welcome to that home.

CHAPTER SIX

SOCIAL CONDITIONS AND PROBLEMS

THE housing problem in Rome was as live a question in Paul's day as it is in ours. The city contained 1,790 palaces and 46,602 tenement houses. In these a population of nearly a million and a half had to find shelter. The private residences accounted for about two hundred thousand, including slaves. The rest had to pack themselves into lodging-houses or flats. These were not well built. Jerry-building was at a premium in those days. In order to make money, speculators reared what were then considered veritable skyscrapers. Cicero speaks of Rome as suspended in the air. Seneca protests against the recklessness of builders who pile flat upon flat, and pictures the poor tenants perched on the top with not the ghost of a chance in the event of fire or a collapse, both of which were a common occurrence. Rutilius Lupus, who died about 77 B.C., wrote a great oration "On the height of public and private buildings." He voiced popular feeling; but even the People, spelled with a capital "P," could do nothing against the avarice of the speculator. Ancient Rome had taller houses than it has to-day, with much less secure foundations. In fact, that was the real danger-point. Buildings were continually subsiding, because sufficient precaution

was not taken to sink the foundations deep enough. Besides, the subsoil was swampy. It had not been properly drained. In the floods of 54 B.C., houses tumbled down like ninepins because the waters undermined their shallow basements and dissolved the sun-dried bricks of their walls. These were often only a foot and a half thick. What resistance could they offer? Augustus was compelled to face this question. He had actually to dredge the Tiber and clear out its channel because it had become absolutely choked up by the buildings which had fallen into it! Think of having to house-hunt with such a choice of fates awaiting! In A.D. 69, two years after Paul's death, there was another inundation with the usual tumbling in of buildings. The Emperor Otho, who was in a hurry to get at Vitellius when speed meant victory, must have cursed the jerry-builders, because for twenty miles the Via Flaminia was absolutely blocked by the collapse of the high houses which bordered it. Their ruins strewed the highway as if there had been an earthquake. Their walls had not been constructed to resist the slightest pressure. To-day our newspapers would have been flaming with headlines; but even apart from the fact that none existed at that time, the collapse of a house was such an ordinary affair that no one thought it worth mentioning. Seneca finds the dilemma of flat-dwellers a matter of amusement. They were positively faced with a choice of evils, either being buried or burnt alive. A thriving business at this time in Rome was

carried on by companies which watched the cracks in the walls and offered to prop up for a little longer the tottering dwellings.

No wonder Augustus took action. He passed a law limiting the height of houses to seventy feet, at least on the street side. As this was a great reduction, one can imagine what eyries there must have been before. In the law there was a clause that it only affected new erections, and not the private rights of back-yards, leaving the proverbial loophole for a coach and four to drive through!

I fear that the boast of Augustus that he found Rome mud and left it marble was a bit of hot air. The slums still remained, threatening to topple over on each other. It was Nero who was the real social reformer, though his methods were drastic. He got rid, at least for a time, of that blot on the civilisation of the Imperial City by burning the whole place down. Rome badly needed even such sweeping measures. They had their compensations: not a single life was lost, and as it happened in July, sleeping out would be no great hardship. In fact, I am writing in June at the present moment in Rome, and the very thought of a few nights in the open is rather refreshing. However, that may be considered whitewashing Nero, and I know it is a useless task. Like his name, his inner blackness would show through the heaviest coating of white; but I mention it as a sidelight on the architecture of Paul's day, and as a part excuse for the Emperor's inhuman deed. We would be more reconciled to that if we

had reason to suppose that Paul, like most of my congregation in Rome, lived in a top flat. There were no lifts in his day. Think of climbing a hundred feet up a dark and rickety stair laden with a chain. It is not an impossible fancy, though in another chapter I have given the Apostle a ground-floor and the use of the atrium. But the very picture of it reconciles us to the fury of the flames. Martial speaks of a poor man who had to ascend two hundred steps to his garret.

Paul must have pondered the subject of housing. It was forced upon him. He, too, had his solution. It also was a fire, but its tongues were invisible and spiritual, and wherever they get a chance they do what Nero's conflagration did—cleanse the city. There are possibly social reformers to-day who are impatient with Paul because he did not attack the evil of overcrowding. They do not understand either him or his Master because their shibboleths had not been adopted. Paul, you may be sure, was quite conscious of the evil, and his sensitive soul burned at its injustice and man's inhumanity to man; but he realised that one thing is linked to another in this world. It is impossible to isolate one wrong from the rest.

For instance, the question of housing depends on the means of locomotion. It is easy to-day, with our cheap underground railways and motor-buses, to spread a population out. There is a thousand times less excuse in our age for overcrowding than in Paul's. The old Romans were defied by distance, and there-

fore, as they could not build out, they had to build up. Cabs there were of sorts. These were called *cisia*. They were open carriages on two wheels, and had a box for light parcels under the seat, and could carry two people. Usually they were drawn by a pair of horses; but in some bas-reliefs at Igel, and on a sarcophagus discovered at Pesaro, a single horse is seen in the traces. Cicero boasts of one of his messengers who actually did fifty-six miles in ten hours, over five miles an hour. What reckless driving! We know that in several places there were regular cab-stands, where the *cisiarii* solicited hires. In Rome, however, street traffic was severely regulated. Six miles an hour was not to be tolerated in a dense city, to the risk of life and limb. Even carts were only allowed to pass through the streets before sunrise. As for private carriages, that privilege was restricted to a very few favoured ones. Claudius passed a law compelling travellers to leave their carriages at the gates of the city, and Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, both wise emperors, confirmed the rule.

How, then, did the lazy and infirm get about? Provision was made for them by the sedan-chair and the *lectica*. These were carried by porters, who formed themselves into a close company called *lecticarii*. They had their headquarters in Trastevere. A big barracks there was named *Castra lecticariorum*. Considering the narrow streets, thronged with bawlers of goods, any other means of locomotion would have been impossible. Therefore the building societies flourished, and speculators lined

their pockets. We know that Cœlius paid a rent of £266 a year for a humble flat on the third floor in the *insula* of Publius Clodius. I almost fear we shall have to put Paul up to a top flat, after all!

Yes, when Paul had to push his way through the thronged streets he would realise how useless it would be to inveigh against skyscrapers. The thoroughfares became so blocked by the erection of booths, by restaurant keepers lining their shops with tables, by barbers, butchers, pastrycooks, who all plied their trade in the open, that traffic had to move at a very slow pace. Domitian made a violent attempt to clear the streets, and earned a stinging epigram from Martial. The thing could not be done. Even emperors had not the art of a London policeman to get a "move on." Beggars as well as speculators profited by the congestion. Where it was particularly bad and people had to go at a snail's pace, beggars took up their stance and made things worse, not only by victimising the crowd, but by adding to the crush. Paul would see that many things had to be put right before the worse evils could be tackled. Yet the authorities were not blind to the needs of the moment. They had three bodies of police, the *urbani*, the *vigiles*, and the *frumentarii*. The first corresponded to our municipal police. They were under the control of the Chief Magistrate. They were instituted by Augustus, and their duty was to patrol especially the crowded parts of the city. The *vigiles* were inferior in rank. While performing the work of firemen, they undertook the duties of night-

watchmen, a necessary task in the days before fire-alarms. They were a strong, well-disciplined force, also enrolled by Augustus. The *frumentarii* functioned more as secret police. I mention this just to show how well governed Rome was. Paul would see about him the evidences of law and order.

The first century is coming ever nearer. To focus it archæologist and excavator have concentrated brain and muscle. Recently, to the east of Trajan's Forum they have exposed to modern eyes a street of ancient shops, a market-place where throbbed the real life of Imperial Rome. Here public opinion was formed, that mysterious force which overthrew both emperors and gods. We know that even the grocer's shop of to-day is an emporium for gossip as well as goods. In those times it was the substitute for the daily paper. Slaves, women, merchants all handed from mouth to mouth the latest information, and the market buyers returned not merely with full baskets but laden tongues. Perhaps the knowledge of the strange happenings in Jerusalem percolated through in this way.

The greatest problem of all was that of slavery. It did not require Christianity to point that out. Seneca with his clear vision saw that in it lay the ruin of Rome. Every home was a miniature of the Empire. The unchecked power of the master, when abused, produced a cold cruelty that in the arena could look unmoved on the tortures of fellow-men. Seneca realised that slavery weakened the moral strength of the Roman, until he was shocked by the helplessness of the Roman noble taking his seat in his sedan-chair

after his bath and having to ask his slave if he were really seated!

What did Paul think of it all? He saw a people wrong in its values. We have extant a letter from a Roman father to his wife. It belongs to the first century. Here is its cruel suggestion: "If you have a child, and it is a boy, let it live; if it is a girl, expose it." That helps us to fill in a patch in the social life of the city, and it is a black one. There was a cry echoing through that dark void, the wail of the helpless and unwanted infant, as it felt the cruel fling of a heartless mother, the chilly waters of some dark pool, or the teeth of some wild beast. "It is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish," said Jesus. How contrary His view of life to the conventional one of that age! No wonder that the impact of His teaching shook the world. Paul saw that Rome was wrong in the use of its wealth. Some years ago there were discovered fragments of inscriptions which described the celebrations of the "Ludi Seculares," as directed by Augustus in 17 B.C. No record of those times makes a more profound appeal to the imagination than this official report of a State ceremony which took place a few years before Christ was born. For three days without interruption the celebration was continued, and it says much for the giant strength of Augustus that he was present all the time. The pomp and beauty which the Romans beheld that day baffles description. Horace led his choir of fifty-four young patricians clothed in white and wreathed with

flowers, and as they marched, the temples which lined the Via Sacra re-echoed the praises of the immortal gods. That was Rome at its proudest. Yet how empty that display! The Roman, with all his wealth, realised that he lacked something. He felt conscious of the superior artistic temperament of Greece, and imagined that was what he needed. Rome tried to imitate its more intellectual neighbour, and vainly thought that it could outdo the original by merely multiplying it. It was not content with a true copy: it must enlarge it. Where the Greek artist would place one temple, so that space might enhance its beauty, Rome would crowd half a dozen larger ones together, imagining that mere mass multiplied the charm. So the Forum became crowded with temples and basilicas, elbowing each other so irregularly that the general effect was confusion instead of symmetry. Paul saw a city wrong in its use of emotion. The human heart is a reservoir of mighty forces. Their use reacts on character. If extended in sympathy and love, they ennoble; if misspent, they degrade. There is nothing which drains the nervous system and saps vitality like excessive emotion. Tears are often a safety-valve, and it is sometimes wise that they should flow unchecked; but the thoughtless hysteria of unrestrained feeling means wreck to body and mind. No age excited this mockery of feeling like those Roman days. It was one of the arts of the statesman to create and satiate this craving for sensation. He found it the best leash for the mob, and provided he gave shows which were thrilling

enough, he could lead the people where he liked. To-day we stand with uncovered heads before one relic of that misdirected passion. One day a sculptor, perhaps in far-off Galatia in the second century B.C., sees a prisoner make a last fight for life and fall beneath the sword-thrust of his foe. He droops, he sinks. For a moment he rests his bleeding body on his hands while he "consents to death but conquers agony." The sculptor carves that scene in stone, and thus petrifies in marble the cruel sport of the Roman.

> And his drooped head sinks gradually low,—
> And through his side the last drops, ebbing slow
> From the red gash, fall heavy, one by one,
> Like the first of a thunder-shower, and now
> The arena swims around him—he is gone,
> Ere ceased the inhuman shout which hailed the
> wretch who won.

Augustus, in his will, mentions with pride that he had exhibited 8,000 gladiators and 3,510 wild beasts. Such was the mentality of the age, such its sham emotion! It was into such a world that Paul brought the Gospel of Christ. It came to consecrate the well of human feeling to noble purpose. Christ has not removed sorrow or death, but he has sanctified them. He has placed a cross above the arena, and over the fleeting clouds of despair He has painted His rainbow of hope.

Paul's solution for all social problems was Jesus Christ. He was a man of "the one thing." He knew the remedy, and where to apply it—not on the surface,

but at the heart. He diagnosed the evil. It was selfishness entrenched in a false religion. The gods must first of all be routed from the field, and with them must be swept all their paraphernalia which ministered to human pride. Paul, his eyes flashing with the zest of battle, made a frontal attack. "There be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, as there be gods many and lords many. But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by Him." That was his challenge.

To-day we can take stock of how this single man, inspired by the Spirit of God, succeeded in his bold adventure. Had he frittered away his time on political or social questions, however pressing, his energy would have been dissipated for naught. His strategy was right. The gods fell beneath his stroke, and with their passing the strongest positions of selfishness have been evacuated. The liberty of to-day, not merely religious but political, the emancipation of the toiler, we owe to those penetrating words of Paul which, spoken or written in his "top flat" in Rome, have resounded throughout the world.

Yes, the gods have gone—not quite. They have left their footprints. I do not refer to their material relics, though every day fresh ones are turning up and their far-off reign is becoming a more realistic thing. Ancient Rome is lying uneasily in its grave: its bones are protruding. The latest are the skeletons of four temples revealed to the public in April 1929 for the first time. Whose skeletons they are is

a puzzle, as the identification discs have been lost, but they have been given indiscriminately the names of Bellona, Vulcan, Juno, and Hercules — though which is which is not certain. As befitting the doctrine that might is right, Hercules has appropriated the central one, which is round. The reason for this is that the name of Hercules has been attributed, probably falsely, to what is known as the round temple of Vesta, on the banks of the Tiber. Higher Critics award it to neither Vesta nor Hercules; but a name sticks, and so when another round temple appeared, the learned men, who are just a step below being Higher Critics, allotted it to that god. They may be right. They have one good chance in four!

However, it is not their material relics which concern us. These are dead things. Their rearguard still lingers on the field of defeat, and Paul's spirit should flash afresh from our eyes as we charge in pursuit to drive the last of these old heathen enemies from their final entrenchments. Unfortunately, in this age of compromise there is a tendency to shake hands and be good friends with the former enemy, forgetting what blood and pain it cost to oust him.

Yes, the gods have departed, but have left their shadow behind them. Perhaps the modern world does not realise how the ghosts of those cold divinities still affect its life. The dead hand has even yet some grip in it. Of course we all know when we begin the year with January that we are recalling the times when the two household deities of Vesta and Janus ruled, the one guarding the hearth, the other the

door, and that March commemorates the birthday of Mars, who once was an innocent god of Vegetation until he became infected with jingoism and began the sabre-rattling business.

There are some things, however, with which we are not so familiar: footprints which still mar our most sacred rites. On the Via Appia, just outside the Porta San Sebastiano, Rome, there are shown two footprints which are said to be copies of those of Jesus Christ. The original ones are pointed out in the church a mile farther on. This matter of the mile is a psychological subtlety that profits by the weakness of human nature. To have exhibited the real thing at once might have been too great a shock for credulity: but the mile gives time for the idea to sink in and to arouse the sense of wonder, if not of veneration.

But I could tell that gaping crowd of other footprints, which are as visible to those who have eyes to see. These belong not to God, but the gods, and are stamped all over the very Church which is supposed to have trodden them under foot.

For instance, the atmosphere is heavy with incense. Whence does it come? From pagan temples, which have left their smell behind them. From bas-reliefs as well as classic literature we learn how large a part incense played in pagan rites. In these old representations of heathen sacrifice there is always a boy, dressed in a white habit, who waits on the priest. He carries a little box in his hands. In it is kept the incense for the use of the altar. The acolytes with their censers to-day are just his shadow.

Virgil, in his *Aeneid*, gives us a glimpse of such a scene where he says:

> Her hundred altars there with garlands crown'd
> And richest incense smoking breathe around
> Sweet odours.

So closely was incense associated with pagan worship that the emperors thought it a sufficient test to put to the Christians. If the accused believed in Christ, then the judge knew that it would be impossible for them to even touch a grain of incense. History proved that judgment correct. Thousands preferred torture and death rather than do what to an outsider might be considered a very simple act. I should think that even the very odour of this offering would be repugnant to Christian nostrils, so reminiscent would it be of cruelty and suffering.

In fact, so much was this the case that under the Christian emperors the very places where it had been used were considered to have become so contaminated that by a law passed by Theodosius they were confiscated and the buildings destroyed. Yet to-day its smoke floats upward through lofty aisles. Whose heel is this?

Again, look at the door of the church. A marble basin is filled with water. From what spring did it come? A very distant one indeed, and one deeply polluted. We read that Crœsus gave two vessels for holy water to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, one made of silver and the other of gold. That gives away its pedigree. The ingredients were simply ordinary

water mixed with salt. Not only was the water of pagan origin, but the sprinkling brush was as old. Pictures of it, the "aspergillum," may be seen in bas-reliefs or on ancient coins.

Ovid has a satirical couplet on this ancient method of cleansing:

> Ah, easy fools, to think that a whole flood
> Of water e'er can purge the stain of blood.

Justin Martyr in the second Christian century does not mince matters. He goes one better than Ovid, and declares "that it was invented by demons in imitation of the true baptism signified by the prophets."

Well, the old gods, if not the demons, as this Father calls them, have planted their feet just inside the church doors, and they will take some evicting.

Looking round, we see the gods again. This time in a brighter reflection. Lamps and candles adorn the sanctuary. Surely they are meant to recall Him Who said, "I am the Light of the world"! Their radiance goes back to dimmer ages. Herodotus tells us of the Egyptians who first introduced these into their temples. They had a famous yearly festival called "The Lighting of the Candles." Lactantius, ridiculing this custom, says: "They light up candles to God, as if He lived in the dark, and do not they deserve to pass for madmen?" It is in the temple of Saturn in the Forum that we have the first traces of the use of waxed tapers in the Imperial City. But once lit, they have never gone out. Their light is more widespread

to-day than ever it was, though not one in a thousand of those who carry candles knows what he is doing, or in what an old-world procession he is marching—one headed by the pagan priests.

One meets something else, another footprint. It is seen in the votive offering which adorns the altar. Silver hearts abound. A sign of gratitude, you say, which is welcome in this age. The custom belongs not to our times, but to darker periods; and I am not sure but that there is more greed than gratitude in the oblation. For favours to come, rather than for those received, is the object of the supplicant. In antiquity the altars had images of metals, stone, and clay, sometimes representing arms and legs, portions of the body which had been healed. The most favourite offering, however, was a picture—just as it is to-day—and the old classical couplet is still true in spirit:

> Now, goddess, help, for thou canst help bestow,
> As all these pictures round thy altars show.

There is a story told of Diagoras, the philosopher, which incidentally shows how old this custom is. It is related by Cicero. One day a friend who was known as "the atheist" met Diagoras in a temple. He accosted him with these words: "You who think the gods take no notice of human affairs, do not you see here by this number of pictures how many people for the sake of their vows have been saved in storm at sea and got safe into harbour?"

"Yes," replied Diagoras, "I see how it is; for those are never painted who happen to be drowned."

The temples of Æsculapius were especially rich in these offerings, which, Livy says, were his pay for the cures he had wrought for the sick. Several of these have been found on the Island of the Tiber, which was the home of this god. Juvenal aims one of his shafts of wit at Isis and the horde of painters who got their living out of her. When referring to the practice, he writes:

> As once to Isis, now it may be said,
> That painters to the Virgin merely owe their bread.

Dressing up images is not merely a modern fashion. The ancients took more thought for the wardrobes of their idols than even the ecclesiastics of to-day. Perhaps the most richly dressed doll in the world is the bambino in the church of Santa Maria in Aracœli. Thousands of pounds have been lavished on its adornment, and its stones are more attractive to the curious than its sanctity; yet if we were to trace the origin of its clothes, we would have to go back a very long way.

Homer pictures Queen Hecuba of Troy prostrating herself before the miraculous image of Pallas with a present of the richest and best-wrought gown:

> A gown she chose, the best and noblest far,
> Sparkling with rich embroidery, like a star.

This leads to the next footprint, that of the actual worship of images. This is a fact too well known to

need comment; but perhaps it is sometimes forgotten that Numa, who might truly be called the Moses of Ancient Rome, would not allow images in any of its temples. Plutarch tells us that this puritan rule was observed for the first hundred and fifty years of the city. Since then it has never been in force!

If further footprints of the gods are wanted, we have only to look a little more around us. In Italy, where I am at present, I am reminded of them at every turn. The very street in which I live used to be the old Semita. That word had a derivative *Semitales*, which meant wayside shrines. How often at cross-roads, or more frequently on hill-tops, does one come across them, and the peasant as he kneels little realises in what a long train of worshippers he takes his place. In pagan days these *viales* or *compitales*, other names for the same oratories, had usually some trees planted beside them on which the votive offerings could be hung. Thus Ovid speaks of them:

> Reverent with Age a stately oak there stood,
> Its branches widely stretched, itself a wood,
> With Ribbands, Garlands, Pictures cover'd o'er,
> The fruits of pious vows from rich and poor.

Such are some of the footprints of the gods which remain. Cicero tells us that in his day on a rock at Regillus the hoof-marks of the horses of Castor and Pollux were still to be seen. The passing of the gods has not been so final as Macaulay puts it:

And straight again they mounted
And rode to Vesta's door.
Then like a blast away they passed,
And no man saw them more.

One wonders what Paul would say to-day, were he to return to Rome. I can imagine there would be in his tone and words something of Samuel, when he accused Saul of not obeying God and completing his work: "What meaneth then this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? Wherefore then didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord, but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."

Think ye the ancient Gods are dead?
They live and work their will.
Before their shrines the sons of men
Bow down and grovel still.

STUDDERT-KENNEDY

CHAPTER SEVEN

ST. PAUL'S LETTER-CARRIERS

WE shall begin with the woman whom Paul trusted.

When Paul needed a "King's Messenger" he chose a woman. That should dispose of the calumny against this Apostle that he underrated the position of women in the Church. He did the very reverse: he honoured and confided in them. Who of all the disciples would have been so modern as to say: "There is neither male nor female, for all are one in Christ Jesus"?

His acts were as daring as his speech. He entrusted to a woman's care a treasure which was to mean more to the world than even he or she could ever have dreamed of. The liberty of the twentieth century depended on the fidelity of that letter-carrier; our present civilisation owes more to Phœbe than it has ever realised. Were she to have lost that package, one of the greatest inspirations in history would have been lost. To that we shall refer later. Meantime we are impressed with the fact that for this important duty a woman was chosen.

We see Paul pacing the floor of a little room in the house of Gaius in Corinth. His thoughts are swifter than his feet or the pen of Tertius, who without shorthand or typewriter has to keep up with that

race of passionate reasoning which rushes from the Apostle's lips. At length the last word is written, the strained muscles of Tertius are relaxed. He pushes aside the parchment with relief. Paul, too, feels an author's satisfaction when "Amen" is reached. But his task is not yet finished. Those were not the days of merely fixing on a stamp and dropping the envelope into a letter-box, and leaving unseen hands to carry it faithfully on its way. A safe means of transit had to be discovered.

We shall not understand why it was necessary to select a special messenger unless we study the postal system of those days. Modern commercialism has done away with the need of Phœbes; but that makes the duty she performed, so urgent in her generation, none the less honourable.

The history of mails is lost in antiquity. One thing of which we may be certain is that neither letter-writing nor posting is a modern invention. In remote ages China had its post office. Egypt, Assyria, Persia, copying each other somewhat, developed systems of posts. For instance, Herodotus says: "There is nothing more expeditious than the way of transporting messages invented by the Persians." Then he describes the elaborate organisation whereby throughout the boundaries of that kingdom changes of horses and men were arranged at centres, and thus an urgent message could be sped on its way without delay. There was a Royal Minister who held the title of "Master of the Post." In the Book of Esther we read how about 510 B.C. Ahasuerus sent letters by

posts to 127 provinces. That reveals a network of communication which linked up the Empire of those days.

Rome became proverbial as a news centre. So much so that it was commonly said that the goddess Fama "during the day mounts the highest building, and during the night runs round telling what she has seen." The equivalent to Reuter's telegrams was a notice-board in the Forum on which events were chalked up, and it was wonderful with what rapidity news travelled. Julius Cæsar boasted of the fact that he sent two letters to Cicero from Britain and that one arrived in twenty-six days, the other in twenty-eight. He had established a line of runners, who at some points were actually able to transmit a message two hundred miles in one day. Thus, in his campaigns, he kept himself in close touch with what was going on in the capital.

Augustus perfected the State service, and one of the high offices he instituted was Curator of the Via Appia. That road had to be kept in good condition. It had been built by Appius Claudius in 312 B.C., and led to Capua and then on to Brindisi, a distance of 350 miles; while the Via Flaminia, made by the Consul Caius Flaminius in 200 B.C., stretched away north-eastward to Rimini, 360 miles. Gibbon, in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, tells us that "the public highways issued from the Forum of Rome, traversed Italy, pervaded the provinces, and were terminated only by the frontiers of the Empire. It will be found that the great chain of communication

from the north-west to the south-east point of the Empire was drawn out to the length of 3,740 English miles. The public roads were accurately divided by milestones, and ran in a direct line from one city to another, with very little respect for the obstacles either of nature or private property."

The postal service established by Augustus was reserved entirely for State affairs, and was only by special permission allowed to be used by private individuals. But the roads were public, and private enterprise made use of them in its system of posts.

The rich Romans had a special class of slaves called *tabellarii*. They derived their name from the *tabellæ* —tablets smeared with wax on which with a stilus messages could be written. The most characteristic thing about their dress was their hat. It was made of felt, with a broad brim to protect the face from sun or rain, and became the orthodox fashion for all representations of Mercury. On one occasion Cicero was irritated by this headgear. Possibly being somewhat long-winded, he had a difficulty in winding up his letter, and he speaks of the *tabellarii* thus: "They are in too great a hurry; they come to me with their hats on their heads saying their companions are waiting for them at the gate." Poor Cicero, we can sympathise with him even yet on Mail Day!

These private couriers had many dangers to face. Cicero says: "The forest of Castulona (in Spain) has become still more dangerous, being infested with robbers who arrest our *tabellarii* and search them;

so that if letters had not arrived by sea, I should know nothing of what is going on."

The biggest joint-stock company of those days, the "Societas Publicanorum," had the most perfect service of couriers. This was essential for their business, which was speculation in taxes. It was necessary to know the condition of the crops or of political affairs in a province before its taxable values could be assessed, and investors demanded the highest return of interest for their money. Therefore it paid the publicans to have the best couriers in their employment. Cicero himself profited by this. He was their legal adviser in Rome, and was allowed to make use of their organisation, so that he transmitted many of his letters by that means.

An interesting feature of the journey was the innovation made by Augustus. He set up two kinds of stations on the road. One was called *mansiones*. Here the courier could pass the night. The word is derived from *manere*, to remain. Rooms were always ready for the tired traveller, and naturally the name assumed a welcome significance which is retained in our English form, "mansions." The secondary ones were called *mutationes*, from *mutare*, to change. Here a certain number of mules and horses were always kept ready for use, on an average not less than twenty. The stop was only for an hour or so in the middle of the day, and generally there was a wineshop in an adjoining building.

Now what has all this to do with Paul? Simply that he had nothing to do with it. He could not

afford to employ such a messenger. He was not a shareholder in a stock company and therefore privileged to use its slaves. When he had a letter to send he must needs seek some other method. So he chose a woman, because she was willing to be his letter-carrier for nothing, and because he had faith in her capability.

There is much in a name. More so two thousand years ago than now. In this case it tells us quite clearly that the lady in question was not a Jew. None of the Chosen Race would have borne a name which in its masculine form was the title of a heathen god, Apollo. We may assume, therefore, that she was a Greek.

The sketchy description given of her by Paul may at the first glance seem to convey little, yet the space between the lines is big and well worth filling. She did not live in Corinth, and was therefore not an immediate neighbour of the Apostle. Her home was nine miles away at Cenchreæ.

Even in these days of motors, people at that distance are often unknown to us. It says much for Phœbe that, though so out of touch with the circle in Corinth, her personality was such that the radius of her acquaintanceship was big. When Paul wanted a helper he went nine miles to get one, because she was of that Christian stuff which cannot be hid.

In two verses he gives her three titles, all of which afford us a peep into her active Christian life. First, he calls her a "sister." That reveals the new and delightful relationship between the sexes in the

comradeship of the Church. Paul insisted on that equality, despite all that detractors may say. His refusal to allow women to speak in church is constantly twisted to yield a wrong inference. There were reasons at that time when such a proceeding would have been most indiscreet; but these belonged to that age. They have passed away.

He next terms her a "servant." The Revised Version translates that word as "deaconess." We know from the letters of Pliny that such an order was in the Church at least as early as A.D. 110, for he tells Trajan that two deaconesses were put to the torture in that year. It is not likely that such an order existed in Paul's time, but it is most probable that it grew out of the activities of women like Phœbe. They already were doing the work of a "deaconess," though the name had not been coined. It gives us a picture of this Christian woman translating her sympathy into service.

The third name he applies to her is "succourer." She did her bit—and the little more which means so much. She was a disciple of the second mile. Not content with serving, she succoured. Not merely the duty which came to her did she perform, but she went out of the way to find the helpless. Paul could not have chosen three more significant words: Sister, Servant, Succourer! How they vibrate with strong Christian character!

Phœbe did far more than she ever dreamed of. The task in itself was not an easy one. There were no Cook's Tourist Parties in those days which a

single woman could join. Possibly she got a ship which took her to Puteoli. It was only a few years previously that the Emperor Claudius had made Ostia a rival port, and the majority of people still travelled in the old way. Three years later, Paul was to come by that route himself. There would be many changes and hardships; but through them all she carried safely the precious manuscript. Little did she imagine that fifteen centuries later some of its words were to revolutionise Christendom.

Three times did one of its sayings strike deeply into the soul of the man who remade Modern Europe. Once at Wittenberg, once during illness at Bologna, but most powerfully of all on the steps of Scala Santa in Rome in A.D. 1512 did that clause in the seventeenth verse of the first chapter of this great Epistle, "The just shall live by faith," search Luther's heart and light the torch of Truth whose rays were to spread throughout the world. Unknowingly Phœbe, the faithful carrier, brought to the West that seed which was to have so great a harvest. Had she failed in her task, and in any of her changes mislaid her burden, where might we have been to-day? It is doubtful if a copy were kept; for Paul himself did not realise the potency of his message, or that his words were to have so far-reaching results.

Her reward was threefold. First there must have been her delight at the joy the letter brought to the Church in Rome. One can imagine how the news would spread during the week that a personal message had been received from the great Apostle.

Possibly the meeting-place on the Sunday would be the "House of Hermes," whose name was mentioned in the Epistle itself, and whose hospitality had made his home a rendezvous for fellow-Christians. Thither out the Appian Way would come in twos and threes a varied crowd. Slaves were there, and high officials from the Imperial Palace. The letter contained strong meat, yet how intently they would listen to every word from start to finish! Smiles of appreciation must have brightened their faces as they heard their names read out. Although Paul had not been in Rome, yet he manifested a personal interest in each.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus," I can imagine one slave repeating to another on the homeward way. What a glorious message that was! Or another would murmur, as if too good to be true: "Heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ!"

Her second reward was a practical one. Paul had asked some of the business men in the congregation to help with her affairs. Apparently she had some legal matter to settle in the capital, and it is evident that the Church could already count on members of social position who would have influence in the city. You may be sure Paul's request was responded to, and that she was repaid by the solicitude and advice of the brethren.

Her last reward is that her name stands first on Paul's great roll of honour. She—a woman—to head that list; surely it is not the unchivalrous Paul who is its author? But it is. Only he is not unchivalrous, and

never was. He honoured woman, and it is fitting that in his way he should reward this special woman, whom he trusted as the bearer of his greatest Epistle.

A great gambler will be our next letter-carrier. "Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger and he that ministered to my wants."

Paul is not above a pun, and it is his witticism which gives us our title. This is not the only time he has used his skill with words. With a clever sally, you remember, he enforced his appeal to Philemon when he played on the word Onesimus by giving it its literal meaning, that of "useful"; as if he meant to say, "This slave lives up to his name." It would raise a smile on Philemon's face, and there is nothing like a smile to unlatch the door of the heart.

Now Paul turns to use a rather painful experience. He had a great deal to do with soldiers, perhaps too much. Being chained to one for two years puts one on rather too familiar terms. Still, he transformed his bonds into a blessing for them, and they in turn taught him many things. Amongst others was the language of the barrack-room. This does not sound edifying; but Paul, like his Master, had the faculty of discovering gold in refuse. There was one topic that was always uppermost in the ordinary private's mind. He dreamed of it, and he talked of it, and that was gambling. The Roman soldier was an inveterate gambler, and Paul's patience must often have been sorely tried as he had to listen to the tale of gains

and losses recounted by his guard. What makes that picture of the crucifixion in the Gospels so real is the true touch of the soldiers casting lots. One artist has cleverly sketched a helmet in their hands for throwing the dice. We feel that description is a photograph in words: that incident at the foot of the Cross gives reality to the scene. It is a bit of the Roman army: whatever the soldier might discard, it would not be his dice. The Latin recruit who had not seen service abroad shouted "Venus!" when he won the toss. It was an acknowledgment of that goddess's help; but the travelled veteran affected the Greek mode. He called out "Aphrodite!" the Greek goddess of gamblers. It was with the Foreign Legion that Paul had largely to do, and their phrases would be dinned into his ears; so that "Aphrodite" became a very familiar expression, and he always associated it with gambling. So in the thirtieth verse of this chapter he borrows a word from that barrack-room talk, and speaks of Epaphroditus "hazarding his life." The word is a gambler's one, and is used as a pun on the name of his friend. Yet there is more than a flash of wit in it. Epaphroditus had taken a gambler's risk with life for Christ's sake. This whets our curiosity to know more about him.

Who was Epaphroditus? His biography in this Epistle is a very brief one; but what is between the lines as well as in them gives us material for a sketch more of character than of incident. We must use inference in filling in details and a little imagination within the range of probability.

He was a member of the church at Philippi, and I am inclined to think he was its pastor; for his outstanding zeal must have marked him as a Christian leader. Now there was no congregation so dear to Paul as this one, and if all the members were like the two samples we know best, Lydia and Epaphroditus, we can understand the reason of his affection. I think, however, there was a touch of romance in that attachment. Paul himself had taken a gambler's risk when he had crossed from Asia into Europe. He had ventured on the unknown almost against his will. His desire to go into Bithynia had been thwarted, and a compelling hand had brought him down to the windy plains of Troy. There his "thorn in the flesh" led him to consult a doctor, and so his friendship with Luke begins. Happy thorn! Here the third person in the narrative of Acts changes to the first. Was Luke "the man of Macedonia"? If not, he was his introducer. Silas had already linked up with Paul, and never were trio better suited for the adventure before them. Even the thorn had its mysterious mission. The very winds favoured them and wafted them across to Macedonia in two days, a trip which took Paul five to accomplish on his return. It was at Neapolis, where he landed, that Paul must have felt the romantic call of the road. There began the great Via Egnatia, that military highway which traversed Greece, joining hands across the seas with the famous Via Appia in Italy that led to Rome. Paul was a man of the road; its silent invitation he could not resist. His energetic spirit and unwearied feet urged him on.

So it was not until eight miles were covered and Philippi reached that the first stop was made. Would he ever forget that Sabbath afternoon walk out beyond the tombs to the quiet spot where the Jews forgathered? There he met Lydia, the purple-seller of Thyatira. She a woman, and an Asiatic, yet the firstfruits of the Gospel in Europe! No wonder Paul always reverenced women! How the Philippians would have scoffed to think that this chance meeting that day was the one thing which was to keep alive the name of their proud city. A heap of stones to-day, the site of a few straggling huts, it is yet remembered as the home of the first European convert to Christianity. Paul's experiences there might have left mixed memories; but the glory of them eclipsed the pain. Was it not in its prison that an angel had visited him? If Jacob held Bethel sacred all his life, how much more reason had Paul to remember Philippi! His first-love was never to wane, and the touching thing was that his loyalty to that church was equalled by its loyalty to him. Twice they sent gifts to their beloved teacher when he was in Thessalonica, once to Corinth, and now to Rome. The fact that Paul accepts those gifts with gratitude is an eloquent proof of his tender feelings towards the donors. From other churches he declines help; but not so from Philippi.

The news has reached those loyal friends of Paul's distress in Rome. Epaphroditus, we can well imagine, is the spokesman. He recalls how Paul himself once begged from them for the poor Christians in Jerusalem, and how it was his very generosity that had

brought about his loss of liberty. Now it was he who required help. It was not for them to say other and richer churches should share the burden. Did they not owe all they were to this Apostle? In his hour of need, could they refrain the hand? For himself, he could not say, "Here am I, send somebody else." No, it must be, "Send me."

So he went, not empty-handed. Paul said he was a great gambler. He took a big risk. First there was his health. It is evident that he was not physically strong. The journey to Rome was a trying one, and when he arrived he did not spare himself. He took no narrow views of his duty. He might have said that his task was fulfilled when he had done his best for the Apostle. He could not be ministering to the prisoner all the time, and the spare hours he might well have claimed for himself. Instead, it is apparent he used them in the work of Christ. What was that but carrying the glad news of salvation into the streets and homes of Rome?

Since I began my ministry in Rome I have had several cases of visitors overdoing themselves sight-seeing, but not one of a tourist who laid himself up by over-exertion in the work of Christ! Yet that work is as urgent as ever in this ancient city; but the visitors, I fear, are not of the type of Epaphroditus. His health was weak, but he risked it for Christ's sake.

He risked more. In Philippi he was evidently a person of some standing. He risked his reputation that he might be the friend of a prisoner. To be looked upon as the comrade of the man chained to a

soldier meant that he must share his shame. Like his Master, "he made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant." To stand by Paul when the storm against him was brewing was no small hazard. The jealous Jews in Rome had keen eyes, and though restrained from open violence by the memory of the harsh measures of Claudius, yet they had underhand methods of wreaking their vengeance, and their long arm could reach to Philippi.

In addition, it does not take a very powerful pair of magnifying glasses to discern between the lines of Paul's letter that Epaphroditus was suffering in Rome from a very painful affection of the heart—home-sickness. "He longed after you all, and was full of heaviness," writes the Apostle. His sympathetic eyes saw what his sojourn there was costing Epaphroditus, though the brave Philippian would have been the last to own it. Was there not a happy home in distant Philippi for which the exile in secret yearned? He had placed something more than health and reputation in the scales: he had unflinchingly sacrificed his own happiness. Knowing the goodness of Paul's heart, I am almost inclined to believe that he made an excuse of this letter to send Epaphroditus home. Nothing else would have forced him to leave his side save a direct commission. So Paul appointed him his letter-carrier, and he had to obey his leader's orders. But it all shows us what this man risked for Christ's sake.

Behind the jest in Paul's words there lies a great

truth. Epaphroditus gambled; he staked his all in his throw for Christ: but he won. He had a right to exclaim, like the lucky soldier, "Aphrodite!" We cannot enumerate all his winnings. The greatest of them go on earning compound interest to all eternity; but some of the smaller and more earthly rewards we shall pick out.

He gained a stout heart. We shall always think of Epaphroditus as a brave man. I do not think that naturally he was of the stout build we associate with daring. His frail body, his sensitive feelings, make courage an acquisition. The venture to him was greater than for most men, and for that very reason the achievement was the more remarkable. He did not flinch where we might have expected him to have done so. Hetherington has said of the Scottish peasantry: "They were trained from their infancy to fear God, and fearing Him to have no other fear." Epaphroditus set out on his mission with the old promise to brace his heart: "I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me."

He begat a large heart. Giving produces growth. After the expansion of such loving self-sacrifice, that big heart would never contract again, and we have proof of it in the shadow which Epaphroditus left in Philippi. It is over fifty years later. A new generation of Christians has arisen in that city; but they have not forgotten the example of that noble-minded pastor who had forsaken all on his errand of mercy. He had gained by that act an influence which lived on long after his death. In fact, we cannot but trace

his shadow in the generous hospitality of that same people when another Christian prisoner comes their road. This time it is the aged Ignatius on his way to be thrown to the lions in Rome. The Philippians come out to welcome him, and despite his chains, escort him as far as they can. When the martyr expresses a wish to send a message back to Antioch, some young men volunteer to be his letter-carriers. Whose influence, whose shadow is this we see in a second generation? Gift-bearers and letter-carriers! Surely these are the spiritual children of the one who was a pioneer in such deeds. Well do they merit the praise of Polycarp in his Epistle.

But the greatest reward of all is the Christ-like character which this believer has bequeathed in passing to the memory of the Church. We know little of the incidents of his life; but even as a broken bit of glass will reflect the dazzling light of the sun, so from this fragment of Christian service shines forth the splendour of the Master's spirit: for He, too, was a Gambler. Studdert-Kennedy has brought this out beautifully in his lines:

> And sitting down, they watched Him there,
> The soldiers did;
> There while they played with dice,
> He made His sacrifice.
> And died upon the Cross to rid
> God's world of sin.
> He was a gambler too, my Christ;
> He took His life and threw
> It for a world redeemed.

And ere His agony was done,
Before the westering sun went down,
Crowning that day with its crimson crown,
He knew that He had won.

The letter to Philemon introduces us to another messenger of quite a different type, whose story fascinates with the romance of the Gospel. Incidentally it shows us what Paul wrote about when his theme was not religious. Here it is practical Christianity. If you were writing a letter from Rome, I wonder how it would compare with Paul's? Possibly you would describe the beauties of the Eternal City, or its public ceremonies, and your letters would be preserved by your friends because of their interest. Yet the Rome of to-day is poor in comparison with the city of St. Paul's time. As a sightseer, he would have had far more marvellous things to write about than you or I. The magnificence of the Imperial Palaces on the Palatine must have fascinated the eye at every turn. The great temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, with its stately columns —how imposing! Then every day there was some stirring event to record. The streets of the city buzzed with the life and the news of a world-wide empire. Paul had plenty of absorbing subjects on which to exhaust his skill as a writer. Yet he says nothing about all that; he has no reference to the kind of thing with which possibly you would have filled your letter. He writes about what would be considered at the time in gentle society as possibly a very vulgar

and sordid matter—the welfare of a runaway slave, who according to the current opinion of the time deserved only to be whipped to death. Even good Christians have thought this letter beneath notice. In the second century they wanted to put it out of the Scriptures, for they said it was ridiculous to imagine that the fate of a runaway slave should be of such concern to the Holy Spirit that He should wish this letter, which has practically no reference to faith or doctrine, to be included in Holy Writ. Even Martin Luther was puzzled, and he had to resort to the theory of allegory to justify its place in the New Testament. Calvin stuck at it, and said: "The subject, indeed, is low and mean." Yet, despite all that, it is still in the Bible; and the more we examine these pages written from Rome, possibly a brief morning's work, scribbled in haste and unrevised, with Onesimus waiting at the door, the more we realise how full of the Gospel it is. It shines with a new light in the world, it radiates with the love of God. If you want to know what Christ came to do in this world, and what He accomplished by His sufferings and His cross, I would point you not to the Acts with that marvellous account of the first triumphs of faith, but to this little letter with its testimony of the power of that new religion on the lives of three men.

It shows us more than anything what a Christian the Gospel made of Paul. Perhaps at first sight you would not think of going to a casual letter for proof of that. If you were asked to give an example of

Paul's heroism, you would probably select that dramatic moment when he was stoned at Lystra, or when in the hour of shipwreck he stood up so bravely and calmly, and held in check the fears of his fellow-voyagers, or many another thrilling incident in that life crammed with daring adventure; but to turn to a letter hastily penned during one of those dull, monotonous mornings when he was a prisoner in Rome seems absurd.

Yet perhaps we reveal ourselves more in our letters than we think. I once married a young man in Calcutta who just before the ceremony in the church asked for a few minutes' private talk with his bride, whom he had never seen since she was a little girl. They had become engaged by letter, and he said to me, "I think letters are sometimes the best revealers of character." Whether that statement is correct or not, at least in this letter of St. Paul we have thrown into clear outline the strong characters of three men, and not least of them Paul himself. Remember that in these drab days Onesimus had brought to the prisoner a joy which solaced his spirit.

By what chance the runaway slave first came in touch with the Apostle we can only guess. Doubtless he was making a precarious livelihood by doing odd jobs, and he may have been sent one day on an errand to that house, and Paul never lost a chance. He was always scattering the seed. He had pretty hard soil all around him in Rome, and this man, who bore in his face the marks of the cruel knocks fortune

had dealt him, would not look a very promising subject. But the wind bloweth where it listeth, and Paul's words were carried into his heart, and there they brought new light. Then the poor fellow sobbed out his story into the sympathetic ears of the kindly Apostle. He was risking the cruellest of deaths to even whisper the fact that he was a runaway slave. Rome had no mercy for such. How tenderly the Apostle received that confession. But it raised a startling problem. Religion is not a thing that dwells in the abstract. It cannot be isolated in a watertight compartment; it penetrates into everyday affairs, and raises difficult questions which require a faith and heroism like that of Paul to solve. Onesimus had become not only a joy to Paul, "his beloved son," but a comfort. This slave seems to have had some nursing gifts, and he was able to minister to the wants of the Apostle, perhaps prematurely old and broken in health. Just these little touches which soothed pain and brought relief meant so much. But the question was raised: Had he any right to the services of this slave who belonged to an owner? Had he wished an argument from sophistry, he might have said: "Philemon is my friend, and if he knew he would be only too glad to think that his slave was ministering to me; therefore I may well keep him." But that excuse did not ring true. Paul, who had preached on righteousness and justice, had an insight too clear to be deceived by selfish interests. No, right demanded that he should return his slave to his lawful master.

We see Paul therefore at his best when he takes up the pen and makes this great renunciation, and faces heroically the painful days of prison life without the comfort and help of such skilful hands. Also there is a deeper anxiety in his heart. There are sleepless nights before him. He knows Roman law. What if his letter fails to move Philemon? What if that man has such a strict idea of legal rights that he considers it his duty to hand over his guilty slave to justice? Yes, Paul chose uneasiness of mind, and body, and heart for many a long day when he wrote this letter. Yet his fingers did not flinch from their task.

Did you ever read a letter so skilfully worded as that to Philemon? Classic literature has, strange to say, almost an exact parallel in the Epistle of Pliny to Sabinianus; but despite its elegant phrases, it is haughty, curt, and frigid, and lacks that delicate sensitiveness so conspicuous in Paul's letter. How gently he breaks the message to Philemon, and even before he has mentioned the name of Onesimus he has evoked his reader's sympathy.

This letter also shows what the Gospel did for Onesimus.

Of all the many characters in Scripture, Onesimus is the one to whom I would first point as a vivid example of what the grace of God can do for a man, and I will tell you why. He is typical in most things of the common run of people; he is not too good to start with. The rich young ruler puts himself out of count when he says concerning the commandments, "All these have I kept from my youth up."

We feel that he is on a different plane somehow. Or take Timothy, with his saintly grandmother and pious childhood: it seems in a sense natural for him to be good. What we want is the case of a man who was bad to start with, and had no chances but only enticements to grow worse; whose life was a hard one without amelioration; who had to toil without pay; for whom the present and future were as black as they could be; who, stung to madness by cruel injustice, might be tempted to curse God and die. If Christ can do anything for a man like that, then we will admit His claim.

Now such a one was Onesimus, the slave. He belongs to Colosse, and that tells a tale in itself. The slaves in Asia Minor had a much harder lot than even those in Rome. In the lordly mansions of the capital there was wealth and abundance, and the Roman nobles of the better type often took a kindly interest in their households; but in Asia it was different; the traditions were not the same. There the slave was treated more as a human machine; it was a land of commerce more than leisure. Large factories demanded their hundreds of workers, and the master was more frequently a trader to whom the sweat and blood of his slave meant money. Besides, it was from the great hinterland beyond the mountains of Phrygia and Pamphylia that the ranks of slavery were recruited. The hands through which they passed were hardened by cruelty, and even if they were fortunate to find a master like Philemon, one does not wonder if their spirits

had become too soured almost to be sweetened by kindness.

His new faith demanded a great sacrifice. If there was one thing more than another which Onesimus valued, it was liberty. That is the heaven of the slave. Oh, to be free! Only in dreamland can he taste that liberty. Longfellow, in his *Slave's Dream*, has touchingly expressed that longing:

> The forests, with their myriad tongues,
> Shouted of liberty;
> And the blast of the Desert cried aloud,
> With a voice so wild and free,
> That he started in his sleep and smiled
> At their tempestuous glee.

Yet the first thing demanded of this convert is to give up that priceless treasure. One would like to know in what delicate and tender words Paul, the faithful minister of Jesus Christ, would present this painful duty to this new believer. We can imagine Onesimus wandering forth into one of the many gardens which beautified the ancient city, to think the problem out. No city has ever had such public parks as ancient Rome. We think London exceptional with its more than 7,000 acres of open spaces, forming 1/10th of its total area; but that is small compared to Rome, 1/8th of whose size was given up to open spaces and parks.

Into one of these the Christian runaway slave might wander.

All things above were bright and fair,
All things were glad and free;
Lithe squirrels darted here and there,
And wild birds filled the echoing air
With songs of liberty.

Yet He who had come to give liberty to the captive requires this slave to renounce what he treasured almost more than life. If you want to measure the force of the Gospel, you can do it best as from the shelter of some shaded nook in one of these Roman gardens there bursts the cry: "Thy will, not mine, be done."

What it did for Philemon hardly comes under our focus, as only his shadow falls on Rome, but it shows a man who stood the acid test of Christianity—that of sacrifice.

Amongst the number of letter-carriers, Tychicus must be included, and he adds distinction to the order. He must have been a man of tact as well as trust; for not only is his selection for the duty a surprise, but the Apostle adds a delicate commission as well. "All my affairs shall Tychicus make known to you, whom I have sent unto you for this very purpose, that ye may know our estate." We would have expected Epaphras, the minister of Colosse, who had brought the message from the church there, to be the one to take the reply back; but there must have been some outstanding quality about Tychicus which specially fitted him for this task, and the Apostle confers on him the Order of

Merit when he calls him "a faithful minister," "a fellow-servant in the Lord."

Paul was well served. Like a great general, he had selected an efficient staff. Though he is chained, he employs other hands and feet than his own. His misfortune gave them their chance, and in summing up the losses and gains of that strange imprisonment we must not lose sight of the opportunity it bestowed on a noble band of men and women.

One cannot fail to take note of the recent scholarly book by Professor George Duncan, entitled *St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry*, in which he assigns to Ephesus or its neighbourhood the Epistles of the imprisonment, and thus revives the old controversy as to whether Ephesus or Rome has the right to claim the prisoner.

His argument that the Asiatic Christians mentioned in those letters could not have been expected to come to Rome is inconclusive; for in all likelihood in those days it would have been easier to make a journey to the Imperial City than to undertake a much shorter pilgrimage in Asia Minor. All roads led to Rome. Besides, his argument cuts both ways. In 2 Tim. there are certainly Roman names, even if the Professor does not give them the identity which we do. On his reckoning, it would be as difficult for these to go to Ephesus as for the Asiatics to come to Rome. I should say more difficult. Besides, the absence of traditional evidence in the one place as against that of the other leaves, I think, very little doubt that the supposition of the present volume is correct.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ST. PAUL'S ROMAN FRIENDS

PAUL was interested more in people than places. His letters from Rome have no reference to the "sights" of the city. Had its marble palaces and temples, of which its emperors were so proud, made no impression on him? Yet the slave, as well as the senator, finds a place in his pages. The "sights" of the city to him were its men and women. His writings teem with human life. What a coming and going there must have been to his house. We just get hints enough to sketch in some of those portraits, faces grave and kind. Some have the flush of ecstasy, others are thoughtful, reflecting in outward aspect the stirring of the depths within. Some have a strange look, like that of Demas, which tells of an inward struggle, the world and Christ contending for the mastery of the soul. We cannot picture them all, though in thought we should like to rub shoulders with them and make ourselves one of that company that is attracted by the personality of the prisoner.

Amongst the people who lived in Rome at that time was one who in many ways had an affinity to Paul. He ruled in Cæsar's palace, for it was his mind and character which still swayed the Emperor Nero. This was Seneca. One cannot but wonder if the Stoic philosopher and the Christian prisoner ever com-

muned together on the deep things of the soul, which so interested them both. Did Seneca draw some of his wisdom from Paul; are some of his wise sayings reflections of those talks; and already had the Church a hand in guiding the State?

Let us begin on firm ground before we allow imagination to spread its wings. Paul had certainly met the brother of Seneca, and left a good impression —in fact, had rather unexpectedly found in him a valiant defender. Luke relates the incident. Paul's work in Corinth had been successful. The Jews had been stung into bitter opposition by the conversion of Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue. They waited their chance for revenge, and thought they had it when the new governor arrived to take over the province of Achaia. He was known as "the sweet Gallio," and therefore they imagined that he would be easy prey. So, making a tumult, they seized Paul and hurried him off to the Roman's judgment seat, shouting that "he was persuading men to worship God contrary to the law."

Never did a mob get a greater surprise. The man whom they considered soft, proved iron. He sized up the position at once. His verdict was ready; he required no defence from the prisoner. He acquitted him on the spot and condemned his accusers. No sooner did the Greeks standing by note the Governor's mood than they saw their chance to get even with the Jews. The cynical smile on the Roman's face encouraged them. The self-important leader of the synagogue, who had felt certain of making an

impression on the new governor and getting Paul handed over to his tender mercies, suddenly found the tables turned. The Greeks had set on him, and what was worse, the representative of Roman justice did not raise his little finger to help him, but seemed to enjoy the scene. Behind this there must have been a good deal. Gallio was not a simpleton. He had collected private information, and was primed on the subject. Like his brother Seneca, he had an interest in philosophers, and possibly had already made a brief study of Paul's doctrines; as in many things they resembled his own Stoic creed, his sympathies went out to this teacher. When all was over I am quite sure that he would sit down and write his brother. It had been due, no doubt, to Seneca that he had been given so important a post, and he would feel it his duty to report his experiences. Anything in the nature of a riot was always considered a serious matter. So there is every reason to believe that Seneca would get his first impression of Paul through his brother. He, too, would smile at the racy description of the discomfiture of the Jews, and how far he may have told the story, who can say? Perhaps he thought it good enough for the Imperial dinner-table, and it may have raised a laugh there, and seven years afterwards Nero, when he sat in judgment on Paul, may have remembered the joke.

But Paul and Seneca had more in common. They were of almost the same age. They died about the same time, each a victim of the same tyrant. As a child Seneca had come to Rome from Cordoba. He

had proved a successful student of rhetoric and had entered the law-courts, where quickly a brilliant career offered itself. He had to go cautiously for fear of rousing the jealousy of Caligula. He became quæstor, and when Claudius married Agrippina he was appointed tutor to Nero. He was assisted in this task by Burrus, the Prefect of the Pretorian Guard, a man of strong character, to whom Paul may have been handed over when he first arrived in Rome. The death of Burrus weakened Seneca's position. His influence over Nero waned, and the Emperor began to cast envious eyes on his great wealth. It is said that Seneca had accumulated a fortune of over two million pounds. So the inevitable happened in A.D. 65. This great philosopher and statesman got the choice of his death. He opened his veins in his bath and passed to a more righteous Master than he had served on earth.

In all likelihood Seneca would be present at Paul's first trial in A.D. 62, when he appeared before Nero, and he might have had a hand in the sentence of acquittal. From Seneca's own writing, we may gather sentences which have a Pauline ring and which justify the supposition that he had learned something of the Apostle's teaching either directly or by hearsay. He speaks of men "as the children of God." Also he imputes Fatherhood to God. Where did he learn this? "God has a fatherly mind towards men and loves them stoutly. He lets them be harassed with toils, pains, and losses, that they may gather true strength." Here is a paragraph which echoes Paul's

very words: "Those therefore whom God approves, whom He loves, these He hardens, He chastises."

He seems also to have grasped the idea of the indwelling Spirit of God. "By what other name," he asks, "can we call an upright, and good, and great mind except a god lodging in a human body?" "The spark of a heavenly flame has alighted on the hearts of men." From this doctrine of the abiding presence, he draws such notable inferences as these: "So live with men, as if God saw you: so speak with God, as if men heard you." "What profits it, if any matter is kept secret from men? Nothing is hidden from God."

With regard to the doctrine of sin, he is even more Pauline. How is this for original sin?—"We shall ever be obliged to pronounce the same sentence on ourselves, that we are evil." "Every vice exists in every man, though every vice is not prominent in each." "Every day, every hour, shows us our nothingness, and reminds us by some new token when we forget our frailty." "The first and greatest punishment of sin is the fact of having sinned." "The beginning of safety is the knowledge of sin."

When it comes to the question of duty he is almost Scriptural in his language: "You must live for another if you would live for yourself." Here is a clause that almost makes us imagine that it is Paul who is speaking: "To obey God is liberty." "That gift is far more welcome which is given with a ready hand, than that which is given with a full hand." I wonder if Paul, his pen still moist with his message to the Colossians, handed on to Seneca his warning about

redeeming the time, and if it found its echo in the philosopher's injunction: "Gather up and preserve the time."

Again, we find Paul's metaphors in Seneca's writings. Which one was indebted to the other for the idea? "The whole world is the temple of the gods. Temples are not to be built to God of stones piled on high. He must be consecrated in the heart of each man." "God is near thee: He is with thee: He is within thee." For one brought up in the worship of the gods, it is a remarkable emancipation of thought to say: "Thou shalt not form Him of silver and gold: a true likeness of God cannot be moulded of this material."

No wonder that the Fathers of the Church spoke of Seneca as "one of ourselves," while in the Ecclesiastical Council held at Tours in A.D. 567 his authority is deferred to with respect equal to that shown to Christian teachers. Of course, the spurious letters which this similarity between Paul and Seneca had produced was largely responsible for the belief, cherished up to the Reformation, that they had met. The date of Seneca's writings might rule out the idea that he had got these thoughts direct from the Apostle, but we must remember the "Saints in Cæsar's Household." There were officials in daily contact with Seneca who were Christians, and it is not improbable that the philosopher would enjoy quiet talks with them on religion. Even if he did not meet Paul personally, there were other ways by which the Apostle's teaching would filter through.

Another interesting side of the subject would be to

trace in Paul's writings the teachings of the Stoics, with which the Apostle must have been familiar. One of the most favourite images of the Stoics was that of the wise man wanting nothing and possessing everything. Had the Apostle this portrait in his mind when he wrote: "All things are yours and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's"? Or again: "As poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing, yet possessing all things."

Imagination has some justification in preening her wings and taking a flight, and offering us a picture of these two meeting in Rome—the Stoic unable to conceal a sense of superiority in his philosophy, the Apostle humble in his faith. Is there an echo of such a *rencontre* in Paul's warning to the Colossians: "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy or vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ"?

Now we shall come to the closer circle of friends, and here we have Paul himself for our guide. He had a genius for friendship. He yearned for it more than for anything else when it was lacking. He seemed dependent on the love of others, just as the Master was. He has preserved a roll of his intimates, and the word-pictures he gives of them in a sentence fill in the background of his Roman home. Of those who were companions with him in his first imprisonment, ten are mentioned. Timothy and Epaphras, three times; Luke, Aristarchus, Tychicus, Epaphroditus, Marcus, Demas, and Onesimus, twice; and Jesus called Justus, once.

Foremost on that roll of honour is Timothy. Strange that youth and age should have such sympathy. When five years later the door of the Mamertine prison clanged on Paul, he sat down on its chill floor a doomed man. The clanking chains weighted with pain the weary limbs. A deeper shadow than the gloom of that cell settled on his spirits. His great heart was very human, and he yearned for a kindly accent, for the touch of a tender hand. So, thinking of all he had ever known, one name rose to his mind. If only he could have Timothy once more beside him!

As we think of those two friends, we see in them mirrors of each other. Paul is a mirror of Timothy. It is through the Apostle that we get to know anything about this youthful disciple. There is only one other reference outside the Epistles of Paul, and that is in Hebrews, where it is stated that Timothy had been set at liberty. Let us see what we can glean about him.

He was a pious youth. That picture embedded in a verse will always remain as one of the most gracious ones in Scripture—a little boy looking up eagerly into the face of his grandmother, while she reads to him out of a scroll in her hand: "I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice: and I am persuaded that in thee also." "From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus." Paul's picture needs no commentary; but a little knowledge of human nature heightens the effect. I have had some experience with mixed

marriage, and seen something of the counter-currents it brings into the home. Reading between the lines, I think that Lois was opposed to her daughter marrying a Greek; but she had to give in. This, however, made her all the more determined, when a boy came, that he should be brought up in her faith. There was a bit of racial prejudice as well as love in the old lady. I have seen it two thousand years later operating in the same way. The result was that if the grandmother lost the first trick, she won the second. She sacrificed a pawn to capture a king.

We next see him in A.D. 45, when he is fifteen years old, as a zealous convert. It was possibly into his grandmother's house that Paul crawled back after his stoning at Lystra, and the young lad helped to wash his wounds, and Paul never forgot his delicate touch. Next, at twenty-one, we see him solemnly ordained as an Evangelist. That picture of the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery is full of tenderness. Now he was qualified to accompany Paul, and how happy he must have been, how proud, too, when he is left behind at Philippi and Berea to consolidate the work. For five years we lose sight of him, then see him with Paul on his way to Jerusalem. They are together again at Rome; but though his presence was such a comfort, Paul was too unselfish to keep such a friend to himself. He sends him to Philippi. He, too, suffered imprisonment, as we see from the reference in Hebrews, and also Paul's commendation: "The good confession which he confessed in the sight of many witnesses." After Paul's release,

they worked together again at Ephesus, and there in A.D. 66 they may have parted, never to meet again. Paul remembers the tears in the young man's eyes. He was an impressionable young man, and that was his danger. We have a hint of that in one of Paul's letters. He seems a little concerned lest Timothy be carried away by the pretentious wisdom of the new philosophies. There may have been cause for this warning; for we cannot forget the Greek in Timothy. Eusebius tells us that he held the office of overseer of the diocese of Ephesus and may therefore be the "angel" of that church referred to in Revelation; and Nicephorus, five centuries later, says that he was beaten to death by the Ephesian mob when protesting against the licentiousness of Artemis.

Timothy is also a mirror of Paul. In him we see a reflection of the broadmindedness of the Apostle. Age is often as much prejudiced against youth as youth against age. Scripture has beautiful friendships like that of David and Jonathan, but these were both young men. Here, is there not something even finer? There must have been at least thirty years of difference in the ages of Paul and Timothy, supposing the former to have been born about the beginning of the century and the latter in A.D. 30. Yet the keen sympathies of the older bridge that gulf. He enters into the hopes and fears of the younger man: he appreciates his efforts, he generously recognises his gifts. He shares the honour of authorship with him in his Epistles. That is an example for old men to-day; but it is not easily followed. Again, Paul's broad-

mindedness is apparent in his willingness to have Timothy circumcised in order to appease Jewish prejudices, while he refused the same rites for Titus.

Paul's practical turn of mind is seen in this friendship. When writing to the Corinthians, his thoughtfulness for his young companion shows itself in his entreaty that they should be good to him and not despise his youth. That is a side of Paul's character that is very endearing—his solicitation for his friend. But the affectionate nature of his heart comes out in the tender way he speaks of Timothy. He calls him his son, "my true child in faith," "my beloved child." The reflection of Paul we see in Timothy is that of a great soul, ever thoughtful, ever loving.

Like the shadow of Paul was his other constant friend, ever at hand, ever ready to ease his pain—Luke, the physician. Was ever doctor so faithful? He gave up everything that he might minister to his patient. It was not money, but love, which was his motive. I can imagine him spending weary hours in reading up medical science, as it then was, in hope that he might discover some remedy for the Apostle's ailments.

We are gradually getting a better idea of the medical skill of those days. For instance, more than a hundred different surgical instruments have been discovered, and many of these are not inferior to those used now. These were mostly of bronze and iron and generally inlaid with silver. About 220 B.C. the Greek doctor Archagathe came to practise in Rome, and set the fashion for others, until the crusty old Cato,

who hated innovations and detested the Greeks, said that these fellows with their medicines had simply come to poison off the Romans. He would have none of them or their mixtures. Cato's shadow still abides!

Very often slaves were educated to become doctors, so that the master could have his own private physician in his household, and if he did not like the dose he could apply the remedy himself! Julius Cæsar, whose wise forethought is evident in so many things, raised the status of the doctor by granting rights to physicians from Egypt and Greece, and induced free citizens to join the profession. Amongst these was the famous Celsus, who, during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius, wrote a book which is considered the masterpiece of Roman medical literature.

There were also women doctors in those days. So there is nothing new under the sun! These confined themselves to the diseases of their own sex and children. They are not to be confounded with the midwives, who had rather a bad reputation. Medical men were well paid, and a fashionable practice meant a fortune. This enables us to realise the sacrifice made by Luke when he devoted his skill to one prisoner. Pliny tells us that Stertinius earned yearly an income of about £6,525; while a certain surgeon called Cami took £2,000 for one operation. How does that compare with London fees? There were heroes and villains in the profession. The latter made a lucrative thing out of it by assisting nature to hasten desirable deaths. Agrippina sent for a doctor to aid her poison

in its deadly work on Claudius; and Nero, a true son of his mother, called in medical aid when his aunt, Domitia, seemed too slow in dying. But amongst so much corruption there stand out some heroes who were a credit to their profession, such as those doctors who, when ordered by Caracalla to kill his father Severus, disdainfully refused at the cost of their lives.

Malaria was a dreaded disease, and the numerous altars to Febris and Mefitis prove its prevalence. There were three temples consecrated to Febris, the divinity of fever, in Rome. She was not a very attractive goddess, and was represented in the act of drinking—I suppose the last thing a fever patient should do. She was bald, and her legs were swollen. Up to the Middle Ages she was still worshipped on the Vatican Hill under the name "Madonna delle Febbri."

Such was Luke's profession. He would eliminate, as far as possible, from it all that was superstitious. His learning is evident from his writings. In his Greek we recognise a number of medical terms. He seems to have understood the distribution of nourishment in the body, and a reference to blood and nerves is betrayed in some compound words he uses, while the action of intermittent or failing pulse is suggested. His friendship was true to the last. "Only Luke is with me" is the best eulogy of faithfulness that friendship could bestow.

Amongst a trio of faithful helpers, Mark is mentioned. It is one of those glad surprises in the story that give the stamp of authenticity. The man whom

Paul had turned down turns up again. Mark began well—with a good mother; but everyone has got his black chapter. Mark's is written for our inspiration. He became private secretary to Barnabas, and then "touring agent" for Paul and his uncle. He was good at making arrangements. We see that at our first introduction to him, when, as a young man, he probably helped his mother to prepare the "Last Supper." All was made ready. That apprenticeship served him well when he set himself to procure transport and lodging for the two Evangelists.

Then he stumbled into the pitfall of so many young men who think they cannot be done without. He struck work at a critical juncture. Perhaps hereditary prejudices made him think that the Apostle was committing a mistake by going to the Gentiles, and he took a modern method of trying to force Paul to his way of thinking. Maybe it was pure funk. Over the mountains of Pisidia came strange stories of wild highlanders and wayside robberies. Travellers' tales are of the same dimensions in all ages, and in Perga there would be a good stock of these. Merchants coming down from Iconium had hairbreadth escapes to relate, and Mark's heart grew faint. Now this failure had three interesting results. It led to a quarrel between two outstanding Christians. Mark must have been ashamed of the conflagration for which he was responsible. That was a bad result; but over against that there are to be set two good ones. God never allows evil to have the last laugh. It doubled the missionary forces, producing two enter-

prises instead of one. It also gave Mark the opportunity of cultivating the friendship of Peter, and thus writing the Gospel according to Peter. Happy quarrel!

Now at the end he has made good, and proved his worth. He has earned mention in Paul's "Dispatches": "Aristarchus, Mark, and Justus, these only are my faithful workers which have been a comfort to me," writes Paul to the Colossians. He is standing by the great Christian veteran in the hour of his need, ready as ever to serve wherever he may be sent. Had Paul now given the order "Perga," he would have gone like a flash.

He won his crown, it is said, as a martyr in Alexandria, and there is every reason to believe that his bones rest under the cathedral called after him in Venice. He gained at last that virtue which at first he lacked:

> Courage, the highest gift, that scorns to bend
> To mean devices for a sordid end.
> Courage, an independent spark from Heaven's
> bright throne,
> By which the soul stands raised, triumphant,
> high, alone.

Aristarchus was one of those quiet helpers, never in the limelight, but always there. He appears first in connection with the great riot in Ephesus, when, along with Gaius, he was arrested. Perhaps that incident explains Paul's reference to him as "my fellow-prisoner." There is no ground for supposing that he was actually sharing Paul's imprisonment

in Rome, though we know that he was with him in Jerusalem and accompanied him on his voyage to Rome, and was "a companion in labour" with the Apostle.

Justus was evidently a Jewish convert in Rome. Knowing the city, he may have been the one who went house-hunting for Paul and secured his hired quarters.

Demas raises a blush of shame, for we all have a feeling that he is so like ourselves. Who are we, that we should condemn him? Yet his fall was great. He is bracketed in front of Luke when first we meet him: "Demas and Luke, my fellow-workers." We feel it a pity sometimes that certain lives do not end at what we would deem their noblest points. Had Demas suffered in Nero's persecution, his name would have gone down laden with honour; now it is synonymous with desertion. How true Christ's words, "One shall be taken and the other left." Luke and he stand shoulder to shoulder in the days of Paul's first imprisonment, but in the second and more terrible ordeal Luke is alone. "Only Luke is with me." With the searching exactness of truth, the reason for this apostasy is given, "having loved this present world."

How cosmopolitan was this group of friends, how far away Paul has already got from the composition of the first church in Jerusalem. Of the number mentioned, only two are Jews and seven are Greeks, the rest are Roman. What a difference, too, in social grades. One is a slave, another a senator. Paul presented in his circle of friends a living commentary

on his words: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

There came a day when that little band was a great strength to the prisoner. The summons at last arrived, after two years of waiting, for him to appear before Nero, and one morning, accompanied by those sympathetic companions, he would set out for his great trial in Cæsar's judgment hall. Naturally we are curious as to where exactly that was. The basilica popularly pointed out to-day as the site is the one built or reconstructed by Domitian. Yet it might have been reconstructed on the foundations of an older building. In fact, there are distinctly the marks of an apse in it which must have belonged to an earlier structure, and the natural inference is this latter was the judgment hall of Nero. His "Domus Transitoria" was the palace in existence in Paul's day. It stretched over the whole area of the Palatine, and included part of the Esquiline, and the villa and grounds of Mæcenas. The Golden Palace had, of course, not yet been erected.

While we cannot be certain of the exact spot, the present ruins of the basilica which superseded Nero's helps our imagination to visualise the scene and sense its atmosphere. The apse, where on a platform was placed the Imperial throne, still remains. Fragments of a marble screen dividing the main part of the building from the apse have been placed in situ, as well as some of the columns which would divide the aisles from the nave. The upper gallery is, of course, gone. The stairs to it ascended from outside.

Into this, or a similar basilica, poured that morning a concourse of officials. Quietly the twenty counsellors would take their places. They were all men of the highest rank, and included the two consuls. In addition were senators chosen by lot, an imposing bench, and there, presiding over all, was the autocrat of the world, whose word meant life or death. At last Christ, in the person of His servant, is before the greatest tribunal on earth. Paul, laden with fetters, is marched in by his guard, and stands, possibly, beside the rail confronting the Emperor. The accusation is read out. The prisoner is accused of disturbing the Jews in the exercise of their worship, and of desecrating their temple, and of violating the peace of the Empire by perpetual agitation, as the ringleader of a new and vicious sect. We may be sure that the emissaries of the Sanhedrin spared neither money nor effort in securing the best legal advice. But Paul had powerful friends, and Roman justice was still honoured by Nero.

Each of the assessors would pass up his opinion in writing to the Emperor, whose word was final. I wonder if Seneca had coached up his royal pupil in his duties. There is little doubt that the great philosopher's sympathies would be with the prisoner. Doubtless Paul had an opportunity to defend himself, and the result of his speech was in his own words, "My bonds became manifest in Christ throughout the whole Prætorium." That reveals what an impression was made by the trial in Cæsar's palace. It was talked about. The prisoner and his pleading were discussed.

I cannot, therefore, think that Seneca was idle in the matter.

Whether the trial lasted more than one day we cannot say; but knowing Nero's love of pleasure, it is not likely that he would devote to it longer than was necessary. He had pressing engagements of quite a different nature claiming his time. In fact, he may have reviewed the case before sitting on the bench, and it almost looks as if Paul had justification for his expectation of an acquittal. Things leak out beforehand, a whisper from the Court might indicate how the wind blew. At all events, the prisoner heard the welcome verdict of acquittal pronounced by the Emperor. His fetters were struck off, and after nearly five years he experiences the novel sensation of being a free man once more.

Meanwhile the herald has proclaimed the sentence outside. A throb of joy passes through the anxious hearts of that little waiting group. To them it seems for the moment as if a charter had been given to Christianity, and certainly until the great fire brought its doom, protection was assured to the Church.

We can imagine Pudens and Claudia hurrying forward and insisting on carrying off Paul to their home. What a happy evening that would be, one of many in which Paul tasted with a quickened relish the delights of liberty and love.

CHAPTER NINE

THE SHADOW OF ST. PETER

NO man ever left a more substantial shadow than Peter.

Is the greatest ecclesiastical building in the world a real monument over the ashes of that Apostle whose profession of faith evoked the Master's words: "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church"? It is only human that the thought should add a sacredness to the spot.

As we cross the piazza in front of the great cathedral, we pause to admire the twin fountains which throw up their jets of sparkling waters until they seem to fling a misty drapery in front of Bernini's lovely colonnades. The spray, wind-tossed, sun-kissed, falls as a transparent veil, through which the stately pillars gleam like a fairy palace. Incessantly, night and day, the fountains add their magic touch to that scene. Sometimes they catch the moonlight on their glistening drops, sometimes it is the noonday glare to which they give a refreshing gleam; but always they shine and fall with their soft music. They are meant to symbolise the Water of Life, which never ceases to flow.

On looking up at the giant dome, the eye fails at first to adapt itself to the new dimensions and take in the idea of size. This grows on us as we trace

the proportions of the magnificent ellipse, follow the lines of the massive Tuscan colonnade, reach the skyline of the balustrade with its one hundred and sixty-six saints standing guard, and then leap with a glance upward to the summit of the mighty dome which roofs the greatest cathedral in the world.

Rome, with a kind of vulgar assertiveness so much in contrast with the delicate taste of Greece, ever sought to parade its strength in mass formation before the eyes of other races. In St. Peter's we have that spirit's last fling. The Latin popes had reached their zenith. They had inherited the ambition of the old Empire, and immortalised their power in a building which probably will last to the end of time, and which incidentally is a memorial to the sins of the fifteenth century; for it was built out of the money gathered from the sale of indulgences!

Is it a memorial also of that Apostle who said to Simon the Sorcerer: "Thy money perish with thee; because thou hast thought the gift of God may be purchased with money"?

We shall gather the facts on which to base our evidence from three sources: history, tradition, and legend; then we shall ask negative criticism some straight questions, and leave the reader to form his own opinion.

From historical records we are collecting constantly fresh material. The discoveries at the "House of Hermes," on the Appian Way, have strongly reinforced the argument in support of Peter's sojourn in Rome. The invocations to Peter and Paul on the

walls belong to the third century, and are a clear proof that at that early date the name of Peter was associated with this spot, which is now regarded as one of the first rendezvous for the Christians in Rome. It is about two miles beyond Porta San Sebastiano, and lies in the hollow from which the word "catacomb" has been derived—*kata* (under) and *kumbos* (a hollow). Increasing interest gathers round this place, where, tradition says, Anacletus lived and Peter himself had his abode.

We are dealing now, however, not with tradition, but material proofs. Eighty references to St. Peter have been dug up on this spot. If there is every reason to believe that St. Paul was here, and even that his body rested in one of the tombs below this house during the Valerian persecution, then is there not much more evidence in favour of Peter's connection with it also?

But the proofs multiply. In this locality were unearthed two fragments of sarcophagi. One is now in the Lateran Museum and the other has been taken to Arles, in France. The figure on both is undoubtedly that of St. Peter. In one he is in the attitude of a preacher, and behind him there is a bas-relief of Christ whispering words of inspiration into his ear. In the other he is reading. These sarcophagi belong to the third century. Why should Peter be chosen as the principal figure on these tombs? Is it not that his name was already so closely linked to this spot that it became the natural thing to reproduce his picture in ornamentation?

Recently, when walking through Glasgow, I was surprised to note how the head of St. Mungo meets one at so many points. It is a far cry back to A.D. 514, when he was said to have been born. His life is hidden in the mists of antiquity; yet his remembrance still clings to the district where he ministered, and were there no other records than these constant references to his name and reproductions of his bust, one would be entitled to assume that he had lived on the shores of the Clyde.

Instead of a span of nearly fifteen hundred years, we have only the comparatively short period of two centuries. Within that time many evidences of Peter's sojourn near what is now the church of San Sebastiano had been transmitted to stone. As these are unearthed, the conclusion becomes more convincing that these memorials of him have no mere accidental connection with this place, but are the natural consequences of his residence here.

From the Via Appia we cross the city to the place where once stood the Circus of Nero. Here is the spot associated with the crucifixion of St. Peter. Some have attempted to locate the scene on the Janiculum. Their reason is evident. They imagined that the hill would magnify the martyr. A cross on such a height would be a spectacle for the whole city and more worthy of the Apostle. But that is the last consideration which would weigh with Nero or his executioners. Besides, culprits were put to death outside the walls, whereas the site indicated on the Janiculum would be within the walls which encircled the fortress

erected there. For these reasons that supposition must be dismissed.

In any case, Peter was most likely to have suffered along with his fellow-Christians, and these we know were cruelly tortured in the Circus and gardens of Nero. These stretched under the Janiculum in the region which was then called "Vaticanus," a word of Etruscan origin, signifying "belonging to the priest." In this neighbourhood was a temple of Cybele, and before that it had been regarded as a holy spot by the Etruscans.

The Circus was built by Caligula; but it became such an infamous place owing to the orgies of Nero, that his name stuck to it. Excavations have revealed the existence of an old cemetery, part of which was pagan and part Christian, which bordered the road passing behind the Circus. Here the victims of Nero's persecution would be buried. On many of the tombs have been found carved the anchor and the fish, and De Rossi has judged these to be some of the earliest Christian symbols in existence. One of the most ancient Christian sarcophagi was discovered here. It is now in the Louvre. It bears an inscription to a certain Livia, and has the sketch of the Good Shepherd and the sheep placed between a fish and an anchor. If we have rightly located the site of St. Peter's crucifixion, then it is the natural inference to suppose that he was buried like the other martyrs in the adjoining cemetery.

It must be borne in mind that the Vatican was at that time outside the city, as also was the Circus of

Nero. A square, flat stone marks to-day the position of the obelisk which stood in the centre of the spina, and which was removed in A.D. 1586 by Sixtus V and placed in its present position in the Piazza San Pietro. The dying glance of the Apostle may have rested on it. It still bears a dedication to Augustus and Tiberius. The rounded end of the Circus lay towards the Piazza. Alongside the wall ran the Via Cornelia, which was afterwards included in the basilica, part of which rests on the foundations of the Circus itself. Without a doubt, Peter was one of those martyrs referred to by Tacitus as "Adfixi crucibus."

We now pass from stone to parchment. The ground may grow a little more debatable as the distance in time increases; but the cumulative evidence gains in force. Clement, who was himself a disciple of St. Peter, makes an allusion to his death in Rome when writing to the Corinthians about A.D. 96. Ignatius, Irenæus Caius (about A.D. 200), Dionysius of Corinth (A.D. 170), Origen, Tertullian, and Eusebius, all refer to St. Peter's death in Rome. Then the *Liber Pontificalis* can be consulted in the Vatican to-day. True, it was not compiled until the sixth century, but it incorporated records of a much earlier date. When these correspond with the evidence of continued excavations, credence in their trustworthiness is increased.

The *Atti Apocrifi*, dating from the fourth century, says that Peter was buried at the Vatican in the Naumachia. A Naumachia certainly did exist in this neighbourhood, and the now disused church near

the Porta Angelica bore the name of San Pellegrino in Naumachia. Again, the same authority says that Peter was led by the *apparitores* to the Mons Vaticanus, near the place called the Naumachia, where the obelisk of Nero stands, for there the cross was erected. Prudentius, the poet of the martyrs in the fourth century, wrote a beautiful hymn for June 29th, the festival of St. Peter and St. Paul. He says the Christians went to venerate the tomb at the Mons Vaticanus, and an inscription in the crypt of the basilica uses the same expression.

Another important witness is Ennodius, Bishop of Favia, in the fifth century. In a letter to one of his friends, who had been in Rome, but who had not gone to see St. Peter's, he says: "You have done wrong. It is true that prayer may be acceptably offered in any place; still, prayers offered actually at the tomb of the Apostle have a great advantage over all others."

An even wider circle of documents is available. These include martyrologies, codices, old guide-books for pilgrims of the sixth and seventh centuries, which describe the exact position of the tomb of St. Peter as being to the west, near the Via Cornelia, at the first mile.

Anacletus, who was Bishop of Rome towards the close of the first century, is supposed to have lived in the "House of Hermes," on the Appian Way. According to the *Liber Pontificalis* he constructed a memorial chamber over the tomb of St. Peter. This was a common custom amongst the Romans, and

such a tomb was called a "Locus religiosus" and was inviolable by Roman law.

The same book, in its story of Sylvester, makes mention of the tomb. It tells the story of how the hermit was summoned from his retreat on Monte Soracte to interpret the dream of Constantine and how he healed him of his skin disease. In gratitude the Emperor built three great basilicas, St. John Lateran, St. Paul's, and St. Peter's. The last two were erected above the graves of the Apostles. Over the tomb of St. Peter he placed a bronze slab measuring five feet, and on this he laid a massive golden cross.

In the year 1594 this original tomb was discovered by Cardinals Bellarmine and Antonianus, who made excavations when the new church was being built. Having penetrated far down below the high altar, they came on the bronze tomb and the golden cross. They were not permitted to disturb the grave, but took measurements which differ from those stated in the *Liber Pontificalis*. The German Wilpert, perhaps the greatest authority to-day on that subject, reconciles the two measurements by presupposing that what the *Liber Pontificalis* calls a "slab" was really a bronze block, and that the measurement of five feet mentioned does not apply to its length, but to its cube shape—that is, its depth and breadth.

Further, those explorers of the sixteenth century reported that below the arm of the cross were written the words: "Constantinus Aug. Helena Aug." The word "Dedicaverunt" is understood.

If that evidence can be relied upon, though it lacks

convincing detail, then it establishes a reassuring fact. In A.D. 846 the Saracens besieged Rome, and though they were not able to get inside the Aurelian wall, yet the church of St. Peter lay outside that defence; for the Leonine wall, which later enclosed this part of the city, had not yet been built. While they robbed the upper church of its treasure, it would seem, if the testimony of these explorers is valid, that the underground tomb had not been disturbed, or else the golden cross would not have remained.

There we must leave our demonstration from material facts. Some of these in themselves may appear little worthy of founding a conclusion on, but when taken together they present a strong reason for believing that St. Peter did live in Rome, and possibly in or beside the recently discovered "House of Hermes"; that he was put to death in the Circus of Nero, and buried close by; and that, first, Anacletus raised a small memorial, and then Constantine erected his great church, which, he is reported to have said, he would make worthy of comparison with the temples of Egypt.

When we pass to pure tradition we enter a wide field and have to sift much chaff before we alight on grains of truth. Yet to-day, tradition is being handled in a more scientific way. The axiom of modern research is that behind the tradition, however fantastic, lies buried fact.

I have only space to cull one story from the *Apocryphal Acts*, also repeated by Jerome, Damasus, and Gregory, and incorporated in the martyrologies

of the seventh century. It relates how the Eastern Christians, shortly after Peter's death, sent to Rome and insisted on obtaining the body of the Apostle. They asserted that he belonged to them. On being refused, their messengers took the law into their own hands and broke open the tomb and carried the body away. They got a little more than two miles beyond the city when a storm of great violence burst upon them, and in their fear they surrendered the body, which was taken to the "House of Hermes" and laid in a catacomb there.

The fantastic trimmings of this tale may cast suspicion upon it; but in it there is something which makes us pause. It is this constantly reiterated connection between St. Peter and the spot where now stands the church of San Sebastiano, which was first called "The Church of the Apostles." It is another knock to drive home the nail of conviction that Peter, both living and dead, must have rested here.

Wilpert explains the origin of all those stories about the body of Peter being deposited in this catacomb by the fact that Anacletus took the body after crucifixion to his house at this spot and kept it there until he had obtained permission to bury it near the place of execution in the old cemetery of the Vatican, and erect a memorial chamber over it. His supposition may be correct, and one can easily see how it might naturally give rise to stories which would justify the tradition that clings to this place.

From legend we take the more Quixotic tale of *Quo Vadis?* Peter is fleeing from Rome and meets the

Lord, and asks, "Whither goest Thou?" and is reproved by the response, "I am going to Rome to be recrucified." What interests us, however, about this legend, which dates from the second century, is that it, too, is connected with this locality. Peter everywhere about here! Is that not circumstantial evidence?

Negative criticism is ready with the challenge that the proofs are too slight, that the absence of direct testimony in Scripture to the presence of Peter in Rome, and especially Paul's omission to mention it, is sufficient contradiction.

There is much truth in this argument, and I think at least that it points to the conclusion that Peter was not in Rome while Paul was there, or even when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans, or else his name would have been mentioned. It is impossible of belief that Paul, who is so thoughtful of even the humblest, would have omitted to mention the most prominent of the disciples. But there is further evidence in support of the fact that Peter could not have been in Rome at that time, or during any period up to A.D. 63. We can trace his movements elsewhere, and a man cannot be in two places at once.

We know that about A.D. 40 Peter was in Jerusalem. Paul, writing to the Galatians, and referring to his conversion, which probably took place about A.D. 37, says: "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." This gives us a date to start from, and we can fit in Peter's movements from it. After that occasion, he visited Lydda and Joppa, and Cæsarea, where

they prayed him to tarry certain days. He returned to Jerusalem, and the next thing we hear of him is that Herod arrested him and put him in prison; but he was delivered by an angel, and went to "another place." That vague locality is seized upon by the Roman Catholic Church as meaning Rome. Rather an invidious way, I should think, of referring to the Imperial City: "another place" forsooth, and it the capital of the world! Romanists have to swallow some pride before they can digest their own argument. But Paul knocks that supposition on the head. He incidentally tells us where Peter was during part of those twenty-five years when he ought to have been Bishop of Rome. In Galatians, the second chapter, he writes: "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem." This was dating from his conversion, and so brings us to A.D. 51, the year of the Council of the Apostles, when "Peter rose up and spake unto them."

Paul also mentions Peter being at Antioch. The memory was not exactly a pleasant one, for he had to rebuke the latter there. This coincides with the testimony of Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, who says that Peter was Bishop of Antioch.

However, when all these facts are weighed, there still remains a door by which Peter could enter Rome. This would be after Paul had been released from his first imprisonment and had left the city. That would be in March A.D. 62. It was an unfortunate time to arrive, for though there may have been some months of undisturbed work, the

storm soon burst. In July A.D. 64 the great fire took place, and I always feel that I see a reflection of those flames when I read the third chapter of Second Peter. The awful scenes of that fire had framed the words for him. He had seen the great volume of smoke literally sweep the heavens away. The roar of these terrible flames still echoed in his ears as he wrote his message, and the furnace of heat as it melted the mighty structures of the city still fanned his cheeks. When he wanted to paint a picture of coming judgment that great fire suggested the phrases: "In the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." It was from "Babylon," as St. John nicknames Rome, that Peter wrote his Epistles, and the fact that Mark was with him bears that out. Paul had left Mark at Rome, and therefore it is natural for him to be mentioned in Peter's letter.

In this city Peter has cast a long shadow; perhaps it has got mixed up a little with that of another St. Peter, who was martyred under Gallienus in A.D. 260 and thus added to the glorification of the clan; but of this one can be certain, that the last to approve of the ecclesiastical splendour associated with his name would be Peter himself.

CHAPTER TEN

WHERE ST. PAUL'S DUST LIES

THE five years' interval between Paul's first sojourn in Rome and his last (A.D. 62–7) has been filled in by so many authors that it is unnecessary for me to give more than a brief sketch of it. Fortunately, from his own writings we can gather most of the material needed. All we have got to do is to link together these different sentences of his:

"As I exhorted thee to tarry at Ephesus, when I was going into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge certain men not to teach a different doctrine." (1 Tim. i. 3.)

"For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou mightest set in order the things that were wanting, and appoint elders in every city." (Titus i. 5.)

"The cloke that I left at Troas with Carpus, bring when thou comest, and the books, especially the parchments. Trophimus I left at Miletus sick. Do thy diligence to come before winter." (2 Tim. iv. 13, 21.)

In the first of these verses there is evidence of a journey taken by the Apostle into Macedonia at a time when he had urged Timothy to tarry at Ephesus. One would almost infer that Paul was himself at Ephesus at the time. The second passage relates a visit paid by the Apostle to Crete in company with Titus. Now in the careful diary given by Luke

in Acts, no mention is made of such a journey; while the message about the cloak left at Troas could scarcely refer to his first visit to that place mentioned in Acts. He would be a most absent-minded man who would leave so useful a garment to the mercy of the moths for nine years, and the last thing we can charge the practical Paul with is absent-mindedness. The mention of Trophimus gives us another clue. He had been with the Apostle at Jerusalem along with other Greeks, and was the occasion with them of the tumult in the city. Paul had no chance from that day until after his release in Rome of being with Trophimus at Miletus.

From all this we may infer that Paul, after a happy and busy time with his friends in Rome, set out to visit once more the churches he loved. We would like to have had a picture of that setting out. The congregations in Rome had multiplied during those two years of faithful ministry and witness-bearing, and many who were soon to have their bodies made living torches in Nero's gardens would give the Apostle a Scottish convoy on his way. At that time the sky was clear, and none foresaw the fiery trial which awaited. Probably he went to Colosse, where he had asked a "lodging" to be "made ready" for him. His heart had yearned after these Eastern converts, and now that he was free, his feet obeyed its behests. He would be sure to visit Philippi, for he had promised to go there as soon as possible. At this point he might have worked in his visit to Crete with Titus.

But the Apostle's unflagging energy could not be contented with covering old ground: he must carry the Glad News to the ends of the earth. Spain! What ambitions it aroused in his heart! To that farthest land beyond the seas he must needs bring the Gospel. It had been an old desire; as far back as A.D. 58 he had written: "Having these many years a longing to come unto you, whensoever I go into Spain." We have two proofs of this journey. The first is found in Clement's letter to the Church at Corinth, which was written about A.D. 95, less than thirty years after the event. In it he speaks of Paul as having "won the noble renown which was the reward of his faith, having taught righteousness unto the whole world, and having reached the farthest bound of the West." The second is the Muratorian fragment dated A.D. 170. It makes mention of "the departure of Paul from the city to Spain."

What we can be certain of is that Paul carried out his intention, as expressed in his letter to Titus, of wintering at Nicopolis. Perhaps on the way he left Trophimus sick at Miletus, and in order not to impede his journey allowed his heavy baggage containing his parchments and his cloak to remain behind at Troas. In all likelihood he anticipated a speedy return; but other Hands were shaping his future. He had already fought a good fight, and the crown was weary of waiting.

Here let me introduce you to one of the finest souls that crosses the pathway of Paul's story. All we know about him is contained in one verse, and it is

a prayer of the Apostle: "The Lord have mercy on the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me. The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day." That is an instantaneous snapshot taken from an unusual angle, that of a prayer. We see him through the eyes of Paul, and we know that the picture is true. Now let us see Paul through him.

The Christians in Ephesus were telling each other the news which had just reached them, that Paul had been arrested, possibly at Nicopolis, and taken to Rome. With Nero on the throne, only one fate could now await him. Debauchery and cruelty had transformed that Emperor into a bloodthirsty monster. The vile seeds of youth were now producing their wild fruit in an unbalanced mind and passionate nature. His soul had steeped itself so deep in blood that the very sight of virtue infuriated it. His crime of matricide had bred its foul offspring. Years before, he had rewarded with a knife the mother who had poisoned her own husband and uncle, the Emperor Claudius, that her son might ascend his throne, thus preferring to be the mother rather than the consort of a monarch. Nero himself was toppling over the edge of an abyss, and in selfish rage sought to clutch at anything which might support him in popular favour. He was especially incensed against the Christians, as wicked men always are against their innocent victims. Yet he had overreached himself with his

tortures. Those very people of whose misery he had made a spectacle had awakened by their patient sufferings a new and unexpected chord of sympathy in even the hard heart of Rome. There were murmurs in the mob, and Nero, hearing of them, gnashed his teeth in impotent rage. By his frightfulness he would teach the crowd to be silent. It was into his hands at such a time that Paul fell.

The friends in Ephesus would mourn sadly at the news. But what could they do? It was impossible for them to help; succour was beyond their reach. But no! There was one who drew himself apart and pondered. Sympathy had wafted his thoughts to Rome. He saw, possibly, a windowless cell, dark save for the flickering rushlights, damp with the dripping moisture from the walls, dirty with the uncleaned debris of years, chilling with its clammy mud, and shivery with its slithering creatures; and there a man, old beyond his years and perhaps racked with pain, is shut out from all human sympathy; and his had been such a heart! How it had rejoiced to shed its love on others, and been gladdened by its return. Was there ever anyone who had so loved the fellowship of men as Paul? Onesiphorus remembered those happy evenings in Ephesus, when that expressive face glowed with kindliness as the little company of Christians had gathered in some room. And now Paul was alone and in want of a loving touch and word. That was enough for this man of imagination. It was sufficient that he visualised the need.

Onesiphorus then did a very daring thing. He

went to Rome at a time when every Christian was trying to get out of it. The perils by the way must have been great, but nothing compared to those which faced him within the city. From even friends he would get warnings that his enterprise would only end in martyrdom to himself. Demas he may have passed, who was hurrying away to Thessalonica, and who in terrified tones would assure him that Rome was no place for a Christian. Still he held on.

When he arrived, probably the first stage of Paul's second trial was over. On this occasion he would in all likelihood be brought before a magistrate in one of the basilicas of the Forum, most probably that of Julia. The crowd would press in to see and hear this lonely prisoner make his own defence. No advocate could be got to plead his cause, no procurator to help him with his evidence, no patrons to beg for a lighter sentence.

"At my first answer," writes Paul, "no man stood with me; but all men forsook me. Notwithstanding, the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me, that all the Gentiles might hear." There, where the scattered ruins of the Basilica Julia lie to-day, confronted by a sea of faces unlit by kindly sympathy, Paul preached his last great sermon. His searching words rang out over that Forum. That an impression was made is clear from the fact that he was not condemned like the other Christians, but was sent back to prison to await final sentence. Even the judge, with such a sermon ringing in his ears, could not carry out his secret instructions to order imme-

diate death. What would we not have given to have had a shorthand report of that Christ-inspired defence! If we descend into the silence of the catacombs to-day, we can still hear its echo. There, tier on tier, lie the ashes of those millions of early Christians. How came there to be such a mass movement? Had that great speech of Paul no hand in it?

After that trial, Paul is led away to the Mamertine prison or to a cell adjoining it, probably as horrible. It is then that Onesiphorus arrives. To associate himself with the condemned required a brave heart. To go to the authorities and confess himself a friend of Paul's, and bring himself under the suspicion in Roman eyes of being an accomplice, seemed like courting death. Few dared such a risk. Luke did. He stuck to his patient: the brave physician and friend that he was! Claudia equalled him in courage, and our British hearts thrill at the thought that she was true to the blood of her race. Perfect love casteth out fear. She came with her husband, Pudens; for Paul sends their greetings in his last letter written from this prison.

And now comes this stranger from Ephesus, hoping that he may be in time. He has won the race. How his face must have beamed as at last, all obstacles overcome, he presses into that gloomy dungeon and clasps Paul's manacled hand in his. Onesiphorus was a convert to be proud of. Vision and courage, these earned a spiritual knighthood for him, a place on the Bible's bead-roll of honour.

When he arrived he set himself the task of cheer-

ing Paul, and he accomplished it. The gratitude of the Apostle measures his success. He comforted the prisoner. Even the strongest sometimes need the solace of sympathy. Christ in His dark hours yearned for human companionship. "Sit ye here while I go and pray yonder": and is a servant greater than his Lord? Onesiphorus did not bring money. Even if he had it, the gift would have been useless; but he brought a smile, a word, a touch.

A smile, a word, a touch,
And each is easily given;
Yet either may win a soul from sin
Or smooth the way to heaven.

A smile may lighten the failing heart,
A word may soften pain's keenest smart,
A touch may lead us from sin apart;
How easily either is given!

It was not that he merely came to the prison. Nearness of body may coexist with antipathy of soul. There are even Church workers who actually undo their work in their attempts to do it—because they lack sympathy. If parish-visiting is a task, then it had better be left alone. What is wanted in the home of sorrow is not your presence but your personality, that which radiates strength through sympathy. This should leap from one like the rainbow-lighted jets of spray from the Roman fountains. Then the lonely one will say of you what Paul said of

Onesiphorus: "He oft refreshed me." Onesiphorus is the type of Christian who can put himself in the other's place. His hand-grip made the chains lighter for Paul, his smile the dungeon brighter, and his words the heart happier.

He inspired Paul with hope. The Apostle had no need of that for himself, for as his end drew nearer his assurance increased until, when he trod the Via Ostia with the executioner's party, it was as one who already saw the crown. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness," he exclaimed in his latest message. It was with the step of a Prince of Heaven that he walked to the block. But when he glanced around on the world which he was leaving he had need of hope. Looking from Rome at that moment, it almost seemed as if the light he had tried to kindle was being extinguished. Christianity was being driven into an early grave. Nearly three hundred long years were to pass before the great resurrection of the Church, until from the catacombs, the abodes of the dead, a new and Christian city was to arise. That was too far off for the failing vision of Paul to see. The present seemed hopeless. But no! Here in this very cell he might pluck a flower, the harbinger of spring, which like the Alpine Soldinella was blooming even amidst the snows of winter. If love to Christ could make such a hero of this Ephesian, would it not triumph in other hearts? As Paul looked on Onesiphorus, he felt a thrill of hope. Has the world not need of such inspirers to-day? And where are they to be found if not in the pews of our churches?

So live as to create great expectations of Christ in the minds of others.

> Of your gladness lend a gleam
> Unto souls that shiver;
> Show them how dull sorrow's stream
> Blends with hope's bright river.

Paul was very grateful for the ministry of Onesiphorus. How did that gratitude express itself? In the highest form. Not in the bestowing of merely earthly trinkets. These may serve a purpose as expressions of devotion. In his last moments King Charles I of England bequeathed some of his personal belongings to the friends who had been faithful to him. Paul, who lacked even a cloak, had little to leave; but he conferred a greater reward than silver or gold on his heroic visitor. He carried his case to the Great Recompenser, the Divine Giver. He pleaded at the throne of Grace God's own promise: "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble."

What special gift did he ask God to bestow on his friend? There, so near eternity, with its white light showing up the absurd values of men, what boon seemed to the Apostle to surpass all others in importance? What favour did he venture to demand? The answer is of importance to us; for with our wrong standards of worth, we are apt to despise the unsearchable riches of Christ. Not so Paul: he had but one request—the biggest of all. He craved mercy

for his friend: "God grant that he may find mercy in that day." Mercy is the sinner's word. It is the thing we need most. It is the biggest blessing we can ask from God.

How soon that prayer may have been answered! There is almost a suggestion in the closing salutation of this Epistle, when a message is sent not to Onesiphorus but to his household, that this brave prison visitor had already paid the price of his devotion; perhaps had passed through the martyr gate before even the Apostle whom he sought to comfort. If so, then already to the humble and astonished Onesiphorus the Great Judge had said in accents of gratitude: "I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And he would have answered in amazement: "When saw I thee in prison?" And the Judge would reply: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

Paul himself was soon to follow his friend, and a reverent imagination loves to picture tenderly the last scenes. Once a sentence was passed, there was little delay in carrying it out. Rome did not believe in prisons. That is why it had so few, and therefore we may be fairly certain that Paul spent his last days in the Mamertine, not in the inner dungeon, but in the cell above it. Here, with a rush wick to light his pen, he wrote his last letter to Timothy and took farewell of the few who risked death to visit him. The date of his execution was probably November A.D. 67.

Scripture has left us no account of his death, but

fortunately we have other sources to draw upon. Clement, writing about the year A.D. 96, says: "There is Paul, too, who through jealousy and strife showed what was the prize of endurance: being seven times imprisoned, exiled, stoned, being a herald (of God) in the East and in the West, he received the noble glory which his faith had gained, and having taught righteousness throughout all the world, and gone to the farthest limit of the West, having borne testimony before rulers, was taken from the world and went to the holy place, having become the greatest example of endurance." Another testimony is found in a letter of Dionysius of Corinth to the Romans, written about A.D. 170. In it he refers to the martyrdoms of both Peter and Paul at Rome, while the Presbyter Caius, thirty years later, in his work against the Montanists, refers to the monuments of the Apostles: "If thou wilt go to the Vatican or out the Ostian Way, thou wilt find the monuments of the men who founded this Church," i.e. the Church in Rome. There we dimly see a bridge across the intervening years. The monuments must have existed for a long time before this, and they form a ghostly hand that links us with the Apostle himself.

As to the actual place of martyrdom, we can also be pretty assured. All executions had to take place outside the city. Therefore on that morning when Paul was "to depart and be with Christ, which was far better," we can picture him being marched by his guards through the gate in the Servian wall which led on to the Ostian Way. A short distance

down the slope his eyes would rest on the Pyramid of Caius Cestius, which borrows to-day its chief glory not from its ambitious builder, but from the prisoner who passed beneath its shadow on his way to death. About a mile and a half from the present basilica the party would turn off the main road to a quiet hollow on the left. Here the fatal preparations would be quickly made. Early tradition has associated this spot with the Tre Fontane. The myth of the three fountains is exploded by the fact that long before Paul's day it was known as the Aquæ Salviæ, where there were three springs. The fact is further corroborated by the knowledge that here executions took place. An interesting sidelight comes from the Apocryphal Greek Acts of St. Paul. There it is stated that the Apostle was beheaded under a stone-pine. That might have been considered as a little pictorial flourish of the author; but strangely, the Trappist monks who have their monastery there, when digging up the earth some years ago to make a water-tank, came on a mass of coins of Nero's time, and several fossilised pine-cones. So there were pine-cones in those days!

When all was over, and the angels were welcoming home the spirit of the veteran, and Christ Himself was saying, "Well done, good and faithful servant," the few devoted friends who had followed that *cortège* along the dusty road now came forward and claimed the body of the martyr. The Romans, with their usual reverence for the dead, would hand it over. This leads us to our last question: Where is Paul buried? "Is,"

not "was." Therein lies the interest. Does the dust of the great Apostle lie under the high altar of the beautiful church erected to his memory outside the walls of Rome? A decisive answer is not so easy as may at first appear. On the one side we must rule out the credulity of the Roman Catholic, who has an implicit faith in tradition; on the other, the prejudice of the Protestant, who has a suspicion of all relics. No admirer of Paul's can approach this spot outside the gate which bears his name without a feeling of reverence. The very possibility that we are within a few feet of the mortal remains of him who said, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body," brings home in a piquant way the meaning of those solemn words. The church itself is perhaps the most impressive monument ever reared over earthly tomb. There is a heavenly calm about those colonnaded aisles, and it always seems to me to inspire a sense of worship far more than the massive interior of St. Peter's. Its freshness belies its age. The reason is that a little over a hundred years ago the older building was burnt down, and though parts were saved, most of the columns and walls are new.

There is something in a name. So thought Gabinius Vettius Probianus, who was Prefect of Rome in A.D. 377. He was a lover of the beautiful, and he was distressed at the devastating zeal of the Christians,

who testified to their faith by smashing the relics of the heathen temples. Many a fine work of art perished, and in order to save some, resort was had to ingenious devices. For instance, a Christian name was thrown over certain temples to preserve them. That of Jupiter became dedicated to St. Jovinus, and that of Apollo to St. Apollinaris.

In his day the beautiful Basilica Æmilia became fair game. It was then this clever prefect had a brain-wave. A magnificent church was being built over the tomb of St. Paul, while the twenty-four columns of Phrygian marble belonging to the basilica were in danger of destruction. How could they be saved? Paulus the saint had the same name as Paulus the soldier, the conqueror of the Greeks, who had erected the basilica in 180 B.C. The similarity contained a suggestion: the shield of St. Paul could be thrown over the memorials of the great soldier. So there is reason for believing that these magnificent columns were transferred to the new church. They changed their allegiance from War to Peace; from glorifying the sword they exalted the Cross. But let me quote from Lanciani, who is my authority for this.

"Towards the beginning of the fourth century it became the fashion to fasten on the neck of runaway slaves and dogs a brass ring from which hung a label giving the name and address of the owner, with the request that, in case of a renewed attempt to escape, the fugitive should be arrested and brought back to his master. These small *keimelia* are of great interest on account of the topographic indications

they contain, such as *ad ædem Floræ ad Tonsores*. The collars of slaves are distinguished from those of dogs by the formula *servus sum* (I am the slave of) with which they begin. Two labels, one undoubtedly of a dog, the other probably so, contain the following words: 'I am the dog of Felicissimus, shepherd of the basilica of the Apostle Paul.' 'Hold me because I ran away, and take me back to Leo of the Basilica Pauli.' These two labels have been quoted by De Rossi, as if they prove that the two basilicas were in existence at the same time, and therefore that the columns of the pagan temple could not have been made use of in the Christian Church; but there is no evidence of synchronism. In fact, the dog of Felicissimus the shepherd is by some years the younger of the two, as shown by the palæography of their respective labels."

There is every reason to believe that Probianus found a home for the orphaned columns in the great memorial church, and that Paulus Æmilius, the proud conqueror of Greece, is indebted to the humble tent-maker for the preservation of the columns on which he had lavished so much wealth and thought.

The fact that such a magnificent edifice stands on what up till to-day was a fairly isolated spot challenges the doubt as to the burial-place of Paul. The church finds no reason for its existence in utility. Were all the inhabitants of the parish to enter its aisles, they would form but a small patch on its polished marble. Clearly its purpose is that of a memorial, and its reason depends on the verity of the fact it com-

memorates. Tradition and the spade both unite in bearing testimony to the validity of that site. The former may have got encrusted with certain excrescences. Lucina is a romantic figure, and she seems to overdo her part a little in history as a ministering angel; still, her shadow presupposes a personality somewhere. Might the original not have been the gracious Roman matron who carried the body of Paul from the scene of execution and laid it to rest in her own sepulchre by the side of the Ostian Way? But we are not dependent merely on one story; others dovetail in. They relate how the body of the Apostle was carried to this spot. When we come to A.D. 253 we find further reference to the tomb; for it was said that during the persecution of Valerian (253–60), when for the first time Christian sepulchres were desecrated, the body of St. Paul was removed to the "House of Hermes," under the church of St. Sebastian on the Via Appia. We have already referred to the recent discoveries there, and the fact that so many prayers scratched by a stilo on the walls are addressed to St. Paul is a proof that he was associated with this place, and substantiates the tradition.

Lime and mortar are our next witnesses. They take us back to the time of Constantine. That Emperor would not have erected a tomb unless he was pretty certain there was a good reason for it, and the date of Paul's death was not so distant for its memory to have died out. In fact, we should be surprised if those early Christians, to whom tradition was so important a method for handing down information, did not pass

on in this way a knowledge of his grave. With the *Liber Pontificalis* we reach the firm ground of written evidence. It says: "At the same time, Constantine built the church of St. Paul, enclosing his body in a case of solid metal, as he had done for St. Peter."

The spade has come in here to corroborate this fact. The case of solid metal has been found. It measures, however, only five feet square. This raises a difficulty. Was Paul so small a man? Could his remains have been placed in such narrow limits? Had he been of such little stature, would there not have been some even more emphatic hint of this than that which occurs at Lystra? However, we must bear in mind that Paul was decapitated, and in such cases it was not unusual for the head to be placed resting on the body and not in its natural position. If this were done in Paul's case, then the shortness of the case is only a further proof of the truth of the story of his being beheaded. We have fortunately in this matter first-hand evidence. Again I must quote Lanciani:

"The marble casing of the grave of the Apostle was seen for the first time on July 28, 1838, when the altar above it, injured by the fire of July 15, 1823, was demolished to make room for the present one. A marble floor was discovered, composed of four slabs, on which was the dedication, PAULO APOSTOLO MART(yri). It is engraved in large letters of the time of Constantine. The slabs and their precious inscription were left visible under the new canopy, and I have myself had the privilege of studying them at leisure (on December 1, 1891) by lowering

myself on hands and knees through the 'fenestella confessionis.' Two things we must bear in mind: first, that the slabs inscribed with the name of Paul are not in their original position, but appear to have been replaced over the grave most negligently, in a slanting direction; secondly, that the inscription is mutilated at the right, and the last three letters of the word MART(yri) are missing."

These broken slabs rest on a pavement of stone, and it is underneath that the cavity of the tomb lies. The lettering is in the rough style of the fourth century, and it is conjectured that the inscription had been cut out after the slabs were placed in position. Two curious rectangular, and one circular, openings in the slabs attract attention. The two former do not penetrate the pavement, but the latter goes right through to the tomb. It has traces of a hinge, to which very likely a lid was attached, which opened and shut. It is suggested that this aperture was used for lowering incense into the tomb, and was probably made in the early Middle Ages, when the use of incense had crept into Christian worship. Once a year the hole would be uncovered and the incense of the previous year drawn up. It was composed of perfumed coal, and the ashes would be divided amongst the faithful, and then, after being replenished, the censer would be lowered again for another year. The rectangular hollows, in all likelihood, were used as receptacles for garments which were supposed to be specially consecrated by being placed thus on the top of the tomb of the Apostle. There is confirmation

of this practice on the monument to Gregory the Great in St. Peter's. There the Pope is represented holding just such a piece of linen as might have been picked up from one of the martyr tombs. Drops of blood are actually depicted on it. The custom still persists. On January 20th certain nuns, to whom the special privilege is accorded, have the cloth woven by them placed over the tomb of St. Peter, and it is supposed thereby to acquire an enhanced spiritual value. The name for this linen is *brandea*, and in this practice we see the shadow of this old rite of the Middle Ages. Incidentally it explains for us these hollows on the slabs above the grave of St. Paul.

We may be pretty confident that when Constantine constructed this handsome tomb the bones of the Apostle were actually there; but that does not mean that they are still in that spot to-day. Many things have happened since the fourth century. The very fact that they were so carefully sealed might attract danger. Curiosity is excited by locks, and the numerous sackers of Rome might be tempted to pry into so imposing a chest on the chance of discovering treasure. We know that the Goths and the Vandals, despite their bad name, showed respect to this church, and actually made it an asylum of refuge for women. It is not likely that they would mar such chivalry by an act of sacrilege. Poor Marcella found shelter there for herself and her maidens, though she herself died on the following day.

We cannot be so sure of the Saracens, who besieged Rome in A.D. 846. This church lay within their lines,

and in fact we have actual testimony to the fact that they did not spare it. In the life of Benedict III we have this reference: "The tomb of the Apostle Paul which the Saracens destroyed he restored." Still there is some comfort in the thought that he found it worth restoring; had there been no relics left there would have been nothing to restore. The fact that the marble top is still there seems to indicate that the contents of the grave escaped desecration. Worse is said to have befallen this sanctuary in the sack of A.D. 1527. But knowing the prejudiced sources from which many of these reports concerning the Protestant soldiery come, we would be wise to allow for a margin of exaggeration.

There is, however, another marauder of whom I am more fearful.

Father Tiber in his manacled old age, like Samson, is even yet given to practical joking. For instance, this morning, after ten years of fairly good behaviour, he has stretched his arms beyond his banks and shaken his fist once more in the face of the Philistine, the modern engineer. I have just seen him in his rage, muddy, fuming, hissing his wrath in spittings of spray which just miss the lower bridges. There have been heavy rains in the mountains, and the water must needs pass this way to the sea. It is better to come indirectly by the channel of a river than directly from the clouds; for Rome loves the sunshine and cannot brook dull skies. I feel somehow as if nature had stepped in this morning to help me with my chapter and answer the question: Who stole St.

Paul's dust? I am inclined to look suspiciously at Old Tiber, for I read in the paper that he has marooned the Trappist monks at Tre Fontane. It is a corner which he seems to like. May he not in one of his raids have broken open the tomb and carried the sacred dust down to the sea, to be borne by it to the four quarters of the globe? If not the dust, the spirit that it clothed has already gone forth to the ends of the earth. The greatest memorial to Paul is not that of marble column or stately aisle, but a living Church in which the Christ he preached is the chief corner-stone.

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Printed by the Replika Process by
Percy Lund, Humphries & Co. Ltd.
3 Amen Corner, London, E.C.4
and at Bradford

BS2505
M28

Mackinnon, Albert Glenthorn

The Rome of Saint Paul.